



# STORY OF SIMLA CONFERENCE AND AFTER IN WORDS AND PICTURES

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*Selections from Mahatma Gandhi*

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TEACHINGS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

*(Foreword by Babu Rajendra Prasad)*

TAGORE AND GANDHI ARGUE

ETHICS OF FASTING

GITA THE MOTHER

THE UNSEEN POWER

THE GOOD LIFE

GANDHI AGAINST FASCISM

THE CONGRESS CASE *(Foreword by Mr. K. M. Munshi)*



VICEREGAL LODGE, SIMLA, WHERE THE CONFERENCE WAS HELD.





# P R O L O G U E

**W**E nearly called this compilation "The Tragedy of the Simla Conference." It was only an eleventh hour second thought which convinced us that what is tragedy for one party may be comedy for another. This alone should prove how objectively we have approached our work.

Critics will, of course, find many faults with us. There is only one kind of criticism, however, to which we would react rather vigorously. We should hate to be told that we hold a brief for one party or another. Compilers, we know, should avoid being authors at the same time.

Nor do we wish to appear as heartless journalists. We have reacted to events as intensely as any ordinary man in the street. Superficially, we regard the failure of the Simla Conference a disaster for the poor, common man who is not so much concerned with politics and the antics of politicians as the problems of hunger, tattered clothes and protection of his family against wind, heat and rain. This was the first time that our leaders had an opportunity of this magnitude of putting their heads together and devising means of reducing his poverty. They, however, thought otherwise and preferred to protract their quarrels, while the common man toiled and at the end of day ate what was not enough for his child and his child what was not enough for a mouse.

All the same we do not propose sitting on judgment over party leaders to apportion blame. But there is one fact to which we cannot help referring. The Muslim League now holds the key to India's future. It has acquired it by virtue of the declarations of the British Government that no step forward will be taken which does not accord with the League's ambitions and designs. Thus while all communities and parties were anxious to seize the Simla offer for all it was worth, the League alone stood apart.

The League has made the best of its opportunity in advancing its claims and few will deny that it has been helped greatly by the British Government's decision to hand the 'Key' to this organisation.

The apparent impasse, so created, is, however, not yet complete. If that were so, we have little doubt that all parties would then combine in devising a generally agreeable formula. India's unity can be forged, in the present circumstances, not by sentimental appeals to unity, but by a wide and deep realisation that there is no alternative to it.

The peculiar soil in which unity can germinate in the political climate of India is not yet ready. Both the Congress and the Muslim League are living in a state of self-induced hypnotism. The Congress thinks that it is strong enough to sweep all opposition. That may be true in Hindu majority provinces but bears no relation to facts in others. The League, armed with the key that the British Government has handed it, is sure that even if it is unable to prove its contention that it alone represents all Muslims, it can still realise its aim. Its effective strength increases in direct proportion to the anxiety of other parties to march forward and that too without raising its little finger. The Congress, it is sure, can only achieve its aim by conceding Pakistan. Thus it would appear that so long as the League alone holds the key, the Congress is unwittingly fighting the League's battle.

We believe that what is needed is a deepening of this impasse rather than a diminution of its intensity. Unity will be nearest when there is utter helplessness. Thus we suggest to the British Government to look for a duplicate of the key which they have given to Muslims in Hindu Majority India, to be handed to Sikhs and Hindus in Muslim Majority Provinces. A simple assurance to the Sikh and Hindu minorities that nothing would be done without their consent should prove an effective enough recipe for India's political ills. This would close all mental exits from which emanate expressions of hopes which bear no relation to present circumstances. This alone will create an impasse of the necessary strength which can prove the starting point of the road to unity.

The question, however, arises : can we not do without unity? We

propose reducing this problem too to its simple rudiments. We believe that India's solution lies in promoting feelings of mutual friendliness and trust. We believe unity is good in itself and what is good is also desirable. Thus anything that leads us towards the achievement of this aim is good and any movement which widens differences is bad.

We have not in our long journalistic career met any person who believes in the goodness of fanning communal hatreds. But we have met a very large body of men who ignore the effect of their actions, and even accentuate differences to acquire momentary political gains. No political ideal, howsoever glamorous, we believe, can be worthwhile whose achievement depends on spoiling human relations.

There is another set of persons who say unity is difficult to achieve, perhaps meaning that it is easier to sow hatreds, which also grow more quickly. Communal organisations in this country are based on this sordid psychological truism. To us the upward path of unity alone holds attraction.

This land belongs to us all. No community need aspire to its exclusive political ownership. Here our ancestors have lived and contributed to its development. And here we and our children's children must also live. The simple choice before us is whether we should bequeath to them a country full of mutual hatred or one radiating friendliness. Our responsibility to them as their fathers and grandfathers is, therefore, great.

We make this point deliberately, for the Simla Conference has shown once again that India's politics is being conducted to-day on an abstract plane. They are almost completely devoid of the human touch. They are not intended to serve any concrete human problem. Instead, they are directed to proving and acquiring lifeless ends.

The present elections again prove this point. No party, not even the Congress party, is anywhere making much of to-day's economic issues. Nobody talks of more houses, better food, playgrounds for children, or of schemes of industrialisation. These real issues are buried deep under the useless and annoying dust of communal and pseudo-religious cries.

One is inclined to deduce from this depressing situation that what India needs is a new party in which the Common Man, who is always nearer the realities of life, dominates.

The Simla Conference has failed. On mature consideration we do not regard it an unmixed calamity. May be India will go down further to rise again.

But India must rise.

“India’s future greatness is not in doubt.”

H. R. VOHRA,

S. R. SONI.

## CONTENTS

	Page
Wavell's "Forgive and Forget" Proposals	5
Press Conference at Delhi	7
Amery's Speech in Parliament	8
Amery explains Veto Powers	13
House of Commons Debate on India	15
King's blessing	15
Cripps's Share in Proposals	19
British Reactions	22
London Press awaits India's Verdict.	23
Viceroy-Gandhi Correspondence	28
Viceroy-Jinnah Correspondence	31
Congress Working Committee Meets	32
Leaders Meet Viceroy	33
Simla Conference Opens	35
Diary of Events	37
The Fateful July 14	59
Who is to Blame?	60
Unionist Protest	67
By Nawab Sir Muzaffar Ali Qazilbash	69
British Press Reactions	70
Viceroy-Jinnah Letters	72
"Time For Interim Settlement Gone"	74
British Press Comments	76
Wavell Tries Again	78
Desai-Liaquat Formula	80





H. E. THE VICEROY BROADCASTING FROM NEW DELHI OVER A.I.R. NETWORK ON JUNE 14.

## WAVELL'S "FORGIVE AND FORGET" PROPOSALS

HIS Excellency the Viceroy broadcasting from New Delhi on June 14 said :

**I** HAVE been authorised by His Majesty's Government to place before Indian political leaders proposals designed to ease the present political situation and to advance India towards her goal of full self-government. These proposals are at the present moment being explained to Parliament by the Secretary of State for India.

My intention in this broadcast is to explain to you the proposals, the ideas underlying them, and the method by which

I hope to put them into effect.

This is not an attempt to obtain or impose a constitutional settlement. His Majesty's Government had hoped that the leaders of

the Indian parties would agree amongst themselves on a settlement of the communal issue, which is the main stumbling-block; but this hope has not been fulfilled.

In the meantime, India has great opportunities to be taken and great problems to be solved, which require a common effort by the leading men of all parties. I therefore propose with the full support of His Majesty's

### Proposals at a Glance

**T**HE keynote of Lord Wavell's statement was the need of co-operation on the part of Indians to make successful the proposals put forward by His Majesty's Government. These were :

The formation of a new Executive Council more representative of organized political opinion, and almost entirely Indian in composition. It would be selected by the Governor-General, after consultation with political leaders, from political leaders, at the Centre and in the provinces in proportions which would give a balanced representation of the main communities.

The Finance, Home and External Affairs portfolios would, for the first time, be held by Indians.

The appointment of a British High Commissioner for India, as in the Dominions.

The immediate release of members of the Congress Working Committee.



Government, to invite Indian leaders both of Central and Provincial politics to take counsel with me with a view to the formation of a new Executive Council more representative of organised political opinion. The proposed new Council would represent the main communities and would include equal proportions of Cast Hindus and Muslims. It would work, if formed, under the existing Constitution. But it would be an entirely Indian Council, except for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, who would retain his position as War Member. It is also proposed that the portfolio of External Affairs, which has hitherto been held by the Viceroy, should be placed in charge of an Indian Member of Council, so far as the interests of British India are concerned.

A further step proposed by His Majesty's Government is the appointment of a British High Commissioner in India, as in the Dominions, to represent Great Britain's commercial and other such interests in India.

### Road to Self-Government.

Such a new Executive Council will, you realise, represent a definite advance on the road to self-government. It will be almost entirely Indian, and the Finance and Home Members will for the first time be Indians, while an Indian will also be charged with the management of India's Foreign Affairs. Moreover, Members will now be selected by the Governor General after consultation with political leaders; though their appointment will, of course, be subject to the approval of His Majesty the King-Emperor.

The Council will work within the framework of the present constitution; and there can be no question of the Governor-General agreeing not to exercise his constitutional power of control; but it will, of course, not be exercised unreasonably.

I should make it clear that the formation of this interim Government will in no way prejudice the final constitutional settlement.

The main tasks for this new Executive Council would be:

First, to prosecute the war against Japan with the utmost energy, till Japan is utterly defeated.

Secondly, to carry on the Government of British India, with all the manifold tasks of post war development in front of it, until a new permanent constitution can be agreed upon and come into force.

Thirdly, to consider, when the Members of the Government think it possible, the means by which such agreement can be achieved. The third task is most important. I want to make it clear that neither I nor His Majesty's Government have lost sight of the need for a long term solution, and that the present proposals are intended to make a long-term solution easier.

I have considered the best means of forming such a Council; and have decided to invite the following to Viceregal Lodge to advise me:

Those now holding office as Premier in a Provincial Government; those who last held the office of Premier; or for Provinces now under Section 93 Government.

The Leader of the Congress Party and the Deputy Leader of Muslim League in the Central Assembly; the leader of the Congress Party and the Muslim league in the Council of State; also the leaders of the Nationalist Party and the European Group in the Assembly.

Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah as the recognised leaders of the two main political parties.

Rao Bahadur N. Siva Rao to represent Scheduled Classes.

Master Tara Singh to represent the Sikhs.

Invitations to these gentlemen are being handed to them today and it is proposed to assemble the Conference on June 25 at Simla where we shall be cooler than Delhi.

### Viceroy's Hope.

I trust that all invited will attend the Conference and give me their help. On me and on them will lie a heavy responsibility in this fresh attempt to make progress towards a final settlement of India's future.

If the meeting is successful, I hope that we shall be able to agree on the formation of the new Executive Council at the Centre. I also hope that it will be possible for Ministries to reassume office and again undertake the tasks of government in the Provinces now administered under Section 93 of the Constitution Act and that these Ministries will be coalitions.

If the meeting should unfortunately fail, we must carry on as at present until the parties are ready to come together. The existing Executive Council, which has done such valuable work for India, will continue it if

other arrangements cannot be agreed.

But I have every hope that the meeting will succeed, if the party leaders will approach the problem with the sincere intention of working with me and with each other. I can assure them that there is behind this proposal a most genuine desire on the part of all responsible leaders in the United Kingdom and of the British people as a whole to help India towards her goal. I believe that this is more than a step towards that goal, it is a considerable stride forward, and stride on the right path.

### Relations with Princes

I should make it clear that these proposals affect British India only and do not make any alteration in the relations of Princes with the Crown Representative.

With the approval of His Majesty's Government, and after consultation with my Council, orders have been given for the immediate release of members of the Working Committee of Congress who are still in detention. I propose to leave the final decision about the others still under detention as the result of the 1942 disturbances to the new Central Government, if formed, and to the Provincial Governments.

The appropriate time for fresh elections for the Central and Provincial legislatures will be discussed at the Conference.

Finally, I would ask you all to help in creating the atmosphere of good will and mutual confidence that is essential if we are to make progress. The destiny of this great country and of the many millions who live in it depend on the wisdom and good understanding of the leaders, both of action and of thought, British and Indian, at this critical moment of India's history.

India's military reputation never stood higher in the world than it does at present ; thanks to the exploits of her sons drawn from all parts of the country. Her representatives at International conferences have won high regard of their statesmanlike attitude. Sympathy for India's aspirations and progress towards prosperity was never greater or more widespread.

*We have thus great assets if we can use them wisely. But it will not be quick ; there is very much to do, there are many pitfalls and dangers. There is on all sides something to forgive and forget.*

I believe in the future of India, and as far as in me lies will further her greatness. I ask you all for your co-operation and goodwill.

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## PRESS CONFERENCE AT DELHI

An Official Spokesman during a Press Conference in Delhi made the following points :

**T**HERE is no present intention of widening its scope or adding to the 21 members to be invited to it.

The Hindu Mahasabha is not being asked to send a representative.

The conference will discuss the general principles of the statements and the Viceroy's broadcast and, if members agree on these general principles and are prepared to co-operate, they will proceed to suggest names for the new Executive Council. These names can be chosen both from inside and outside the legislature.

*The size of the new Executive Council is not fixed ; it will be one of the points to be decided by the conference. The conference will generally decide its own procedure.*

The present plan for an interim Government is not subject to modification ; but if members of the conference unanimously agree

to put forward a plan for the final solution of the constitutional problem His Majesty's Government, as already declared by them, will be delighted to accept that solution. His Majesty's Government have been waiting for it.

*If the 21 members of the conference think that there is a better alternative plan to end the political deadlock and are agreed on that alternative, it is open to them to say so.*

The intention is to create an atmosphere in which the whole country can go forward, and so it is desirable to have harmonious relations between provincial governments and the Centre ; but, constitutionally, the new Central Government can co-exist with provincial governments in their present form.

Question : "If the conference unfortunately fails, will members of the Congress Working Committee be put back in jail ?  
(laughter).

Answer : "Not immediately, I should think" (more laughter).

# AMERY'S SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT

Here is the text of the statement made in the Parliament by Mr. L.S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, on June 14 :

**D**URING the recent visit of Field-Marshal Viscount Wavell to this country His Majesty's Government reviewed with him a



MR. AMERY

number of problems and discussed particularly the present political situation in India.

Members will be aware that since the offer by His Majesty's Government to India in March, 1942, there has been no further progress towards the solution of the Indian constitutional problem.

As was then stated, the working out of India's new constitutional system is a task which can only be carried through by the Indian peoples themselves.

While His Majesty's Government are at all times most anxious to do their utmost to assist the Indians in the working out of a new constitutional settlement, it would be a contradiction in terms to speak of the imposition by this country of self-governing institutions upon an unwilling India. Such a thing is not possible, nor could we accept the responsibility for

enforcing such institutions at the very time when we were, by its purpose, withdrawing from all control of British Indian affairs.

The main constitutional position remains therefore as it was. The offer of March 1942 stands in its entirety without change or qualification. His Majesty's Government still hope that the political leaders in India may be able to come to an agreement as to the procedure whereby India's permanent future form of government can be determined.

His Majesty's Government are, however, most anxious to make any contribution that is practicable to the breaking of the political deadlock in India. While that deadlock lasts not only political but social and economic progress is being hampered.

The Indian administration, over-burdened with the great tasks laid upon it by the war against Japan and by the planning for the post-war period is further strained by the political tension that exists.

All that is so urgently required to be done for agricultural and industrial development and for the peasants and workers of India cannot be carried through unless the whole-hearted co-operation of every community and section of the Indian people is forthcoming.

His Majesty's Government have, therefore considered whether there is something which they could suggest in this interim period, under the existing constitution, pending the formulation by Indians of their future constitutional arrangements, which could enable the main communities and parties to co-operate more closely together and with the British to the benefit of the people of India as a whole.

It is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to introduce any change contrary to the wishes of the major Indian communities. But they are willing to make possible some steps forward during the interim period if the leaders of the principal Indian parties are prepared to agree to their suggestions and to co-operate in the successful conclusion of the war against Japan as well as in the reconstruction in India which must follow the final victory.

To this end they would be prepared to see an important change in the composition of the Viceroy's Executive. This is possible without making any change in the existing statute law except for one amendment to the Ninth Schedule to the Act of 1935. That Schedule contains a provision that not less than three members of the Executive must have had at least 10 years' service under the Crown in India. If the proposals I am about to lay before the House meet with acceptance in India, that clause would have to be amended to dispense with that requirement.

### **Viceroy's Executive Council.**

It is proposed that the Executive Council should be reconstituted and that the Viceroy should in future make his selection for nomination to the Crown for appointment to his Executive from amongst leaders of Indian political life at the Centre and in the Provinces, in proportions which would give a balanced representation of the main communities, including equal proportions of Muslims and Caste Hindus.

In order to pursue this object, the Viceroy will call into conference a number of leading Indian politicians who are the heads of the most important parties or who have had recent experience as Prime Ministers of the Provinces, together with a few others of special experience and authority. The Viceroy intends to put before this conference the proposals that the Executive Council should be reconstituted as above stated and to invite from members of the conference a list of names. Out of these he would hope to be able to choose the future members whom he would recommend for appointment by His Majesty to the Viceroy's Council, although the responsibility for the recommendations must, of course, continue to rest with him and his freedom of choice, therefore, remain unrestricted.

### **Defence of India.**

The members of his Council who are chosen as a result of this arrangement would of course accept the position on the basis that they would whole-heartedly co-operate in supporting and carrying through the war against Japan to its victorious conclusion.

The members of the Executive would be Indians with the exception of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, who would retain

his position as War Member. This is essential so long as the defence of India remains a British responsibility.

Nothing contained in any of these proposals will affect the relations of the Crown with the Indian States through the Viceroy as Crown Representative.

The Viceroy has been authorised by His Majesty's Government to place this proposal before the Indian Leaders.

His Majesty's Government trust that the leaders of the Indian communities will respond. For the success of such a plan must depend upon its acceptance in India and the degree to which responsible Indian politicians are prepared to co-operate with the object of making it a workable interim arrangement. In the absence of such general acceptance, existing arrangements must necessarily continue.

### **External Affairs**

If such co-operation can be achieved at the Centre, it will no doubt be reflected in the Provinces and so enable responsible Governments to be set up once again in those Provinces where, owing to the withdrawal of the majority party from participation it became necessary to put into force the powers of the Governors under Section 93 of the Act of 1935. It is to be hoped that in all the Provinces these Governments would be based on the participation of the main parties, thus smoothing out communal differences and allowing Ministers to concentrate upon their very administrative tasks.

There is one further change which, if these proposals are accepted, His Majesty's Government suggest should follow.

That is, that External Affairs (other than those tribal and frontier matters which fall to be dealt with as part of the defence of India) should be placed in the charge of an Indian Member of the Viceroy's Executive so far as British India is concerned, and that fully accredited representatives shall be appointed for the representation of India abroad.

By their acceptance of and co-operation in this scheme the Indian leaders will not only be able to make their immediate contribution to the direction of Indian affairs, but it is also to be hoped that their experience of co-operation in government will expedite agreement between them as to the method of working out the new constitutional arrangements.

His Majesty's Government consider, after the most careful study of the question, that the plan now suggested gives the utmost progress practicable within the present constitution. None of the changes suggested will in any way prejudice or prejudge the essential form of the future permanent constitution or constitutions for India.

His Majesty's Government feel certain that given goodwill and a genuine desire to co-operate on all sides, both British and Indian, these proposals can mark a genuine step forward in the collaboration of the British and Indian peoples towards Indian self-government and can assert the rightful position, and strengthen the influence of India in the counsels of the nations.

Explaining the Proposals in the House of Commons Mr. L.S. Amery said :

"The offer of March 1942 stands in its entirety. That offer is based on two main principles. First no limit is set to India's freedom to decide her own destiny whether as a free partner in the Commonwealth, or even without it. Second, that this can only be achieved under a constitution or constitutions framed by Indians to which the main elements are consenting parties.

"These principles, if I may quote the Prime Minister 'stand in their full scope and integrity. No one can add anything to them and no one can take anything away.' This is an affirmation not only of our own loyal purpose but of the inescapable facts of the Indian situation. We can only transfer our ultimate control over India to a Government or Governments which are capable of exercising it. We cannot hand India over to anarchy or civil war. Our responsibility to the people of India themselves and, indeed to the peace of the world forbids that. On the other hand we cannot impose a constitution that will break up the moment our authority is no longer there to sustain it.

### **The Deadlock.**

"So far no progress has been made in that direction and the internal deadlock, essentially a deadlock as between Hindu India and Muslim India, remains unresolved. We should do wrong to be unduly impatient with Indian political leaders for their failure to find common ground. The issues at stake are great

and the differences of approach to the problem are based on convictions sincerely and strongly held."

Mr. Amery added that the right solution would presently emerge and certainly His Majesty's Government would at all times be anxious to give such assistance as might contribute to its attainment.

"Meanwhile, India cannot stand still. Over and above the effort still required for the war against Japan there is an immense task of reconstruction which cannot wait for the slower processes of political adjustment but which at the same time call for the whole-hearted co-operation of every community and section of the Indian people. This cannot be done without some real advance in the political field, some closer and more effective association of the organised political forces in India with the government of their country.

### **All India Union, The Ideal.**

"At the present juncture this is only possible on an interim and provincial basis. It must be without prejudice to the ultimate constitutional settlement. The ideal to which we have always looked is that of an all-India union in which the States would play their full part. At the same time we have also recognised the possibility that agreement between Hindus and Muslims on any form of Indian unity may be unattainable. Any interim advance, therefore, must in no way prejudice the question whether the ultimate settlement is based on a united or divided India or affect the existing position of the future freedom of choice of the States. That means that it must be within the existing constitution, for there is no change in that constitution which would not be regarded as giving a bias in favour of one or other solution. There can be no question, therefore, of making the executive responsible, in our parliamentary sense, to the legislature. That would at once in Muslim eyes imply control of united India by a Hindu majority.

"Nor can there be any question of doing away with the existing power of the Governor-General to overrule a majority view of the council if in his opinion, I quote the language of the Act, 'the safety, tranquility or the interests of British India are, or may be, essentially affected,' nor of his consequent responsibility of the Secretary of State and to

Parliament for its exercise. That power is a power in reserve, not an instrument in normal use.

"So long, however, as there is no Indian constitution under which controversial issues can ultimately be resolved, it is a necessary protection for the minorities whether against immediate injury or against decisions which might prejudice the constitutional future. It is in any case a power whose main-purpose is to safeguard Indian interests. That applies no less to the Viceroy's duty, in the existing constitutional position, to secure the fulfilment of our obligations towards the States.

### **British High Commissioner.**

"In order to emphasise this aspect of the Viceroy's position as well as for reasons of practical convenience, His Majesty's Government have, in connection with these proposals, decided to appoint a United Kingdom High Commissioner in India to represent particular interests of the United Kingdom.

"Under the present conditions there is always the possibility that the Viceroy might, on a particular occasion, be placed, in dealing with his Council, in the ambiguous and even embarrassing dual position of being both concerned, as the head of the Government of India, with the defence of Indian interests and, at the same time, with representing the specific material interests of this country. A United Kingdom High Commissioner, on the other hand, would be free as in the Dominions to discuss and negotiate with the Government of India on a footing of complete equality but also of complete frankness."

### **"They Have Served India Well."**

Mr. Amery, continuing said he had reviewed the conditions inherent in the situation which indicated the only line on which advance was possible. He described the changed composition of the Executive Council in the last five years and paid a tribute to the present Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

"These Indian Members," he said "are men who have played an active and distinguished part in Indian public life. They responded to the Viceroy's invitation to join him as colleagues because both as patriots and as practical men they believe that they would serve India better by assuming responsibility

than by abstention. They have served India well and the value of their service and of the advance it has represented will some day be more fully recognised.

"Unfortunately, it has to be admitted and the Members of the present Council would be the first to admit it, that their position is weakened by the fact that they do not enjoy the support of the main organised political parties. Neither in the Legislature nor in the Press are they sustained as a body by that measure of co-operation, goodwill and understanding which is so desirable for the carrying out of the great and urgent tasks of reconstruction.

### **Plea for Agreement.**

"Nothing could serve that purpose better than if the leaders of those parties, postponing without prejudice the constitutional issues which have so far divided them, would agree together in giving their support to the formation of a new executive selected from among the leaders of Indian political life both at the Centre and in the Provinces.

"If the offer which His Majesty's Government now make is accepted, all portfolios except that of the War Member, held by the Commander-in-Chief, will be transferred to Indian hands. The portfolios transferred would include not only the important Home and Finance Departments but also that of External Affairs hitherto reserved to the Viceroy in person. This would naturally be accompanied by the appointment of fully accredited representatives abroad and so constitute a definite enhancement of India's international status. The new Executive would thus in fact, though not as the outcome of any formal constitutional process, be more representative of organised Indian political opinion.

"In selecting his Council, the Viceroy will be concerned to secure a balance of representation of the main communities including equal proportions of Muslims and Caste Hindus. I understand that he also intends to include representation for the Scheduled Castes, for the Sikhs and possibly for some other special interests. But the essential condition is equality in representation between the two main communities. That is indispensable to securing agreement.

"If however, the proposals for a newly selected executive at the Centre are accepted,

we would hope that ministerial governments would be resumed in the Provinces, now under Section 93, on a coalition basis. Such questions as the holding of elections whether at the Centre or in the Provinces will no doubt be discussed at the Conference which the Viceroy has invited to meet him."

Referring to the composition of the Conference Mr. Amery said: "These then are the proposals which the Viceroy on behalf of His Majesty's Government is laying before India. They owe everything to the initiative of Lord Wavell, to his deep sympathy with India's aspirations and to his firm belief in India's future greatness. Their actual final form was shaped in consultation between him and the leading members of both the main parties in the late coalition. They thus represent an agreed national offer on the part of this country to the people of India.

"We earnestly hope that our offer will meet with acceptance." Mr. Amery concluded: "It is the utmost that we ourselves can do pending Indian agreement upon the final

constitutional settlement. We believe and hope, however, that if accepted, the co-operation of Indian statesmen in facing many practical and urgent issues of India's needs, may help to bring the day of agreement nearer.

"In any case the acceptance of our offer opens up a wide field of opportunity for Indians to mould their country's destiny, to build up its prosperity at home and to indicate its importance in the world scheme of the future. India has played, thanks to the valour of her fighting men, a notable part in the world's struggle for freedom.

"She feels that both her past efforts and the developments which she envisages entitle her to equal pride of place both among the people of the British Commonwealth and among the great nations of the world. We share that desire and, so far as in us lies, are making our offer as a genuine contribution to that end. We are placing India's immediate future in Indian hands. It is for them to take and shape it."



JOURNALISTS AT "BURJ"

REUTERS

OVER ONE HUNDRED NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS CAME TO SIMLA TO REPORT THE CONFERENCE.  
HERE IS A SMALL BUT REPRESENTATIVE GROUP.

## AMERY EXPLAINS VETO POWERS

**A**DDRESSING a Press conference of United State and Empire journalists shortly after his statement in Parliament Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, said that the proposals, which he had laid before Parliament and which Lord Wavell had announced at the same time, had met with very general approval in the Press of all shades of opinion.

They had, of course, represented an agreed policy between all the main parties in Britain. They were discussed in England, before the Coalition broke up, between Lord Wavell and members of the Government—Liberal, Labour and Conservative—and *they were, therefore, an offer from the British people to the people of India.*

Mr. Amery indicated the likelihood of discussion on the subject of Provincial and Central elections for India at the forthcoming conference on the new proposals, which was to be held at Simla.

### Utmost Offer.

"I think that this offer represents the very utmost it is in our power to give," declared Mr. Amery. "Not that we might not wish to

give everything straight away, but we cannot do more at this moment without precipitating in India an internal conflict which would destroy hopes of further advance.

"The difficulty really is this. What is reserved in fact is this reserve power of the Viceroy to overrule a majority decision of his Council.

"By the actual law of India, the Government is normally carried on by the decision<sup>s</sup> of a majority of the Viceroy's Council. Under these proposals, if accepted, this would be a Council in which all the members, except the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy would be Indians. This reserve power is one which, as the Act makes it clear, is not in the interests of Britain but in the interests of India. Until there is a real democratic constitution in India, under which the various elements in India's national life feel they are secure and under which difficult constitutional problems are resolved as they are in Britain, by the method of election, there must be some reserve or arbitral power to protect certain minorities."

Mr. Amery went on to say that the veto also existed to guard against unfair treatment



the interest of the States, pending such time they also came into the future Indian Government.

### eto Power.

"In order to make that clearer, Government has decided to appoint in India as in the British dominions, a United Kingdom High Commissioner, who would discuss with departments of the Government of India such economic questions as they would wish to urge, negotiate treaties and get rid of the idea that the Viceroy in his capacity as head of his Council was using his influence to induce his Council to accept things which are in Britain's interest and not in India's interest."

The British Government wanted to make it quite clear that the reserve powers of the Viceroy were not used in any sense against Indian interests, but existed to protect interests, in this interim period, until India could agree upon a future constitution, or if he could not agree upon a single constitution, upon constitutions for a divided India.

"This is a reserve power," declared Mr. Amery, "and it is a power that has not once been used in the five years I have been Secretary of State. During all that time, in which

there has been a large majority of Indian members of the Council every decision has been taken by a majority of the members of the Council and not under orders from here.

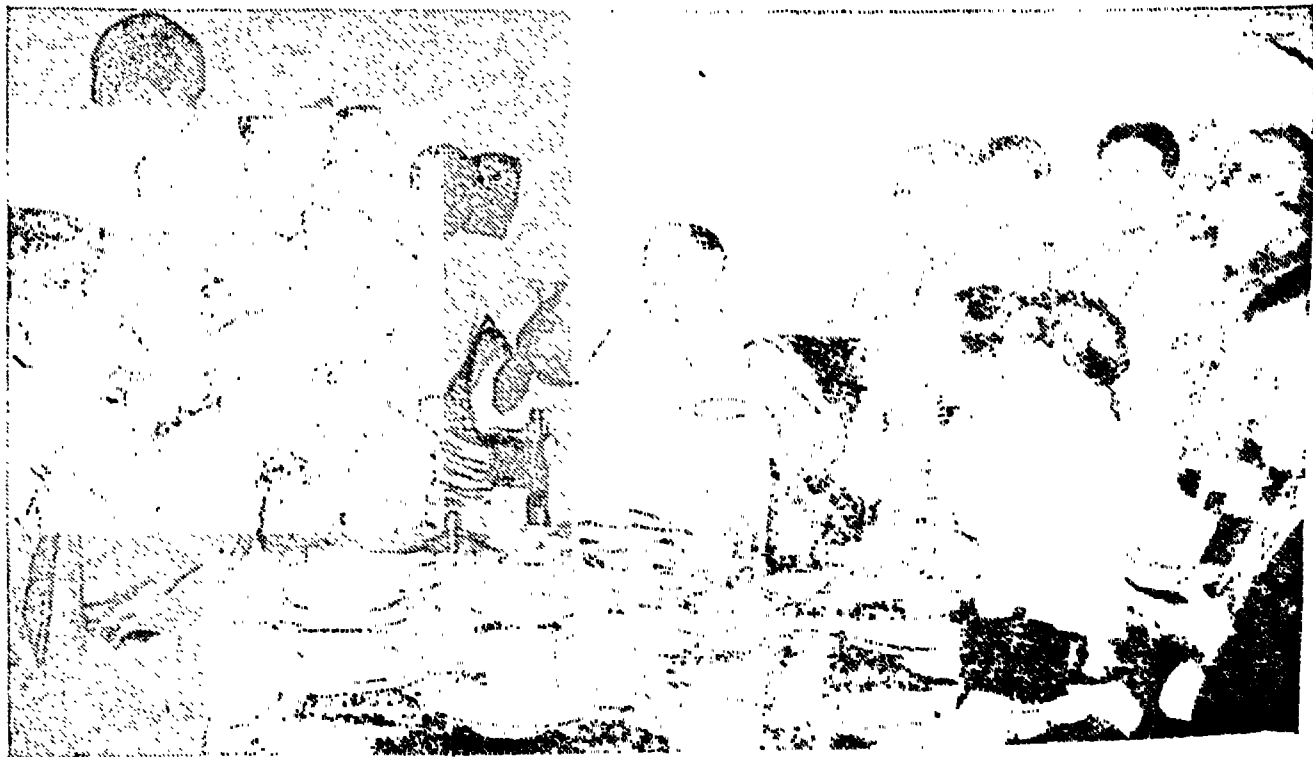
"I do not think that has been clearly realized, either in the world in general or in India. If Indian leaders, as a result of the new proposals, find themselves in the Viceroy's Council they will I think realize for the first time how wide are the powers which they enjoy.

"While these powers represent the utmost length that Britain could go, they went a very great length, indeed," continued Mr. Amery.

"There is nothing in the proposals, if accepted, that will debar members of the Council from dealing with the whole problem of reconstruction entirely as they please. It will be for them to decide industrial, agricultural and health policies and so on.

"It will be in their power, so far as British India is concerned, to decide who is to represent her as Ministers in foreign capitals, and in which capitals India wishes to be represented."

*(Continued in page 15 column 1 bottom)*



AN INTERESTED OBSERVER AT SIMLA WAS DURGA MOTA. REDUCED BY RATIONING WORRIES, HE BELIEVED THAT ONLY A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COULD SOLVE HIS FOOD PROBLEM.

# HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE ON INDIA

MR. CLEMENT ATTLEE, Leader of the Opposition, speaking after Mr. Amery in the House of Commons debate on India, asked his friends in India to "seize this opportunity."

He began by saying that the action taken by the Government was, as Mr. Amery had said, the result of considerations given to this matter by the late National Government and of discussions with the Viceroy.

It was clear that Indian politicians were unable to solve what was called the deadlock. Labour was always anxious, as he thought the House was, too, for Indian self-government, but they recognised the enormous difficulties of forming a constitution for a sub-continent of 400 million people of immense diversity of ways, language and degree of civilisation.

He believed it was a tragedy that the Cripps offer, brought to India on behalf of the late Government, had not been accepted. As Mr. Amery had said, that offer was still open. He agreed with Mr. Amery that a constitution could not be imposed on India, and this attempt being made by the Viceroy seemed to him to be the only practical line of advance at the present time. He thought the attempt

(Continued from page 14)

## India's Freedom

"The proposals, if accepted, impose no real barrier or check upon India's freedom to pursue her own course, both at home and in the world. The checks, such as they are, are entirely concerned with difficulties in the Indian internal situation which, it is hoped, would be resolved before long.

"We hope the practical co-operation of Indian statesmen of all communities at the Council will make it easier for them to understand each other better, and we hope before long to suggest ways and means for an approach to the ultimate constitutional problem.

"Three years ago, the Cripps offer proposed the setting up of the Constituent Assembly. That is one suggestion—there may be others."

## King's Blessing

Reference to the Viceroy's invitation to Indian leaders was made by the King in his speech proroguing Parliament. He said:

*My Government have authorized the Governor-General of India to invite participation of Indian political leaders in the Government of British India.*

*I earnestly hope that this invitation will be accepted, so that the immediate task of a united war against Japan and post-war development in India may be undertaken with the full co-operation of all sections of Indian public opinion.*

bring made to get Indian leaders to enter the Viceroy's Executive and, by working together on practical problems to learn to cooperate, deserved the support of leaders of public opinion.

The proposals went a very long way. They carried forward the process of Indianisation which had been going on for decades, but which had been greatly accelerated in recent years. It enhanced the status of India in its relations with other nations. There was no doubt whatever that the representatives of India took a high place among the representatives of so many nations at San Francisco.

Mr Attlee went on to say that this was only an interim arrangement. At the moment complete agreement could not be obtained in India on an Indian constitution. He asked his friends in India to seize this opportunity. He knew how deep was the desire for the government of India by Indians, and that India should be democratically governed. The foundation of democratic institutions, he said, was tolerance. Their success depended on the way in which majorities and minorities could live together in unity without either oppression on the one hand or fear on the other.

He urged friends in India to remember that in the British Commonwealth progress had been effected rather by practice than theory. Every step forward had led to the next step, until full self-government had been achieved and formal acceptance of constitutional changes had been given after they became accomplished facts.

He urged leaders of Indian public opinion and leaders of political parties to show statesmanship and to take a practical step forward, instead of standing aloof and troubling too much about theory. He was quite sure the decision to release the detainees was a wise one.

Mr. Sorensen (Labour) interjected: "It is very belated."

Mr. Attlee: "That may be, but then Mr. Sorensen has not got the responsibility."

Mr. Attlee, continuing, said: "I believe we will all join in wishing the Viceroy success in his efforts and hope that this gathering may be as widely representative as possible, that he may obtain the co-operation of the leading members of the community in all provinces, and that together they may be able to get an agreement which will lead to another practical step forward."

"If you can get that practical step of working together in a Government, then you will have an infinitely better chance of solving the constitutional problem, which must be faced apart from this interim arrangement."

SIR JOHN WARDLAW MILNE (Conservative): "I think it is a very definite step forward which surely at least should show the whole world our anxiety to carry out the plan set out in the offer sent to India some years ago. The thing now is to look to the future, to hope and believe that this offer will convince finally the people of India that, by making this offer, we have done everything that can be done by this House. There is no further step I can see that we could take to bring about self-government in India on the lines offered when Sir Stafford Cripps went out some years ago."

"The final step must come from India herself, and I am really hopeful at last that, if this offer is accepted, we shall find that members of different communities, whose differences are really very deep and very difficult for a European to understand, and who are very fearful of the future in many cases, will come together and get away from the feelings that have divided them in the past."

"It is not going to be easy at all and it is very difficult for the world to understand conditions in India. I wish very much that not only this House but other nations understood

them, and I wish very much that they were fully understood in the United States, for instance. I hope this offer will be accepted, and I hope and believe that, if it is, it may be the beginning of an understanding between the different parties which may eventually bring about a scheme of government which will lead to the final triumph of self-government."

MR. R. SORENSEN (Labour.) "The White Paper and its significance does need careful and sympathetic reflection. I feel personally, it is regrettable from the standpoint of the best interests of our country and of India that the prisoners could not have been released earlier. I think they would have followed the lead of Mr. Gandhi, and not have interfered with the war effort."

"I am not unaware of some allegations made and of a White Paper issued some time ago, making a long series of allegations, and attributing to the Congress responsibility for the disturbances. I do not believe personally it proved the case it claimed it could prove, but be that as it may, in my judgment, if the prisoners could have been released long ago, it might have contributed to the general goodwill and well-being."

"I entirely endorse the remarks regarding the danger with democracy. There is a wide difference between a purely mechanical democracy on the one hand, and the essential special content of democracy on the other. Because of that, I recognise we cannot merely in a mathematical way try to get proportional representation of all the parties. But we have to make allowance for that flux and flow of life and thought, which can perhaps bring about some reconciliation of the parties, which at times have been hostile and antagonistic."

"I know that the Congress has itself made it clear that it is not enough to apply a merely mathematical and mechanical democracy. It has made a very big offer to the Muslim League. Let us not believe that it is not appreciated in some measure by our Indian friends as well as by us, that it is the spirit of democracy that counts."

"It appears in fact that there is no real advance on what was taken out by Sir Stafford Cripps some two or three years ago, save that in a representative and symbolic way the Viceroy's Council is now to include in every one of its offices an Indian personality. That is of definite psychological value—the

recognition that Indians are capable of filling not merely relatively minor offices of state, but every office of state.

**"The essence of it all lies in the question as to how far power is being transferred or is likely to be transferred. The Viceroy still retains his veto. It depends on how it is to be exercised and on the other hand, how far Indian political leaders are prepared to accept that veto and work for its reduction or minimisation.**

**"We all remember the difficulties that occurred when there was partial acceptance of the Government of India Act for the provinces. For some time there was considerable discussion and hesitancy regarding the vetoing function of the governors of provinces. Somehow or other that difficulty was overcome. It may be that in this particular instance the very considerable remaining powers of the Viceroy will be accepted by the Indian parties.**

**"I hope so, because, as one who believes we should move as far as we can on lines of understanding and experiment, I do not want to see bitter conflict, recrimination and hostility either between the Indian parties on the one hand or between them and ourselves on the other."**

**Mr. Sorensen said an India governed under a constitution framed by Indians would have a profound effect on the whole eastern world. Therefore, he waited with hope for an encouraging response from India, and that, despite the drastic criticisms that were sure to come, Indians would interpret this offer constructively.**

**Mr. Graham White (Liberal) said the British wanted India to enjoy the same freedom that they enjoyed themselves.**

**"That is the unchangeable purpose of Parliament and our people," he declared. They did not believe that political separation would accentuate the difficulties between Britain and India but, on the contrary, would lead to the closest association. In many things India and Britain were essential to one another. The maintenance of stability in south-east Asia, the pressing needs of India's growing population, developing the industrialisation of India, all demanded co-operation on the friendliest basis.**

**The proposals made to-day provided a sound practical step towards the final stage of the**

**transfer of power. He sincerely hoped they would meet with a practical and immediate response in India, which, he was sure, would be met more than half way by this country.**

**Sir. Fredrick Sykes (Conservative) welcoming the Government's proposals, said this was a very momentous occasion. Above all, Mr. Amery's statement had given the impression of sincerity. Some might doubt the great step of handing foreign affairs over to an Indian, but he thought the recent Indian delegation to this country and the Indian delegation to San Francisco had proved that Indian leaders could carry both weight and responsibility.**

**He wished Lord Wavell the greatest success in the task he was shouldering and congratulated the Government on the steps they were taking.**

**Mr. Thomas Harvey (Independent) said no this last working day of the present Parliament the Government had made an announcement full of promise for India, for the Commonwealth and the Empire, and, he believed for the peace of the whole world.**

**He hoped that people in India would examine the White Paper in the spirit in which Mr Amery and Mr. Attlee had spoken. It was an immense step forward in the direction of full freedom. They all wanted to see freedom in India and not a negative freedom but a positive one. But they did not want the people of India to adopt the forms of democracy while losing the spirit which alone could make democracy work.**

**In this Parliament members had seen how a place had been found for the minorities to express their opinions and to take their place in the life of the nation, even in time of the greatest danger. The same spirit was what they desired to see in India.**

**Dr. Haden Guest (Labour) said this was a great state occasion, and the proposals a great state announcement. He hoped his friends in India would consider the tremendous economic and social problems of poverty and starvation in India, and realise that they would have those social and economic problems completely in their own hands. He believed Lord Wavell had himself contributed very largely indeed to the proposals. That great soldier-philosopher was just the type to appeal to India. The Viceroy had put the question of the social condition and health of India first among his numerous pre-occupations.**

Dr. Haden Guest concluded : "I believe this will stand as a great achievement in the record of this Parliament. We have opened the door of freedom to India"

Mr. Arthur Colegate (Conservative) agreed that the proposals constituted a great act of state and that much was undoubtedly due to the Viceroy, but he thought a tribute was due to Mr. Amery for the great part he had taken in this matter.

Now it was up to India to make some response. During his visits to India, he said he had encountered much able criticism, but no constructive proposals. Most people here and many in the United States thought Indian leaders would incur a very grave responsibility before the bar of history if they did not come out now with some constructive response. He hoped that this would be forthcoming, and that these proposals would mark the first page in a new chapter of Indian history.

Professor A. V. Hill (Conservative) said Mr. Amery had held on to his course steadfastly despite obstruction and abuse and might well feel that this was the crowning act of his life. This was indeed a momentous occasion. There was a wide and growing conviction that India's future welfare and her place as a proud and prosperous nation depended not only—perhaps not even chiefly—on the political and constitutional structure but on the determination of the people themselves to apply all the resources of modern civilisation to improving the lot of the common man. Much had been done to set India on the road to greater happiness, health and prosperity but Indians should not be content that material improvement should come from outside. It should come from within. Not until the common man himself had the feeling that he had some personal responsibility could the process of planning full development really proceed far. There was also the feeling that there could not be whole-hearted application of the methods of modern civilisation until the present political tangle was unravelled.

"Now is the time for a further try to gain that confidence and co-operation which must be available. I know that the new try is being made in utter sincerity, not as the final stage but as a step to the achievement of nationhood in India."

Mr. William Cove (Labour), a frequent

speaker for the Committee of Indian Congressmen, said that with the devastation of Europe the focus of world politics would shift to the East. He had a sort of presentiment or fear of American imperialism. He did not want India either sentimentally or economically to enter the orbit of any other country.

Mr. Cove suggested that, having regard to the magnitude of the problems and the vital issues involved, the White Paper should have been published at least a few days ago to enable members to study it.

Mr. Amery, intervening, said that it was impossible for the Viceroy to make his announcement before he had had time to make certain arrangements in India.

I would gladly have seen this announcement made weeks ago." Mr. Amery said, "but I am sure the House will realise that it was only fair to the Indian public that the announcement should be made in India by Lord Wavell at the same time as it was made here."

Mr. Cove continuing, said it would be a grand thing for the emotional response that was desired if not only the Congress leaders, but also all the unknown men and women now in jail, were let out. He hoped there would be a swarm of releases from jail to provide a favourable psychological background for the next step forward.

He was not sure whether the British Government was quite flexible enough and was not sticking too rigidly to the Cripps offer. He hoped this flexibility would be forthcoming both here and in India.

Mr. Cove concluded : "We must meet a new Indian situation because Britain, facing as she does Russia and America, cannot live move and have her being unless she maintains the goodwill, friendship and co-operation of all members of the British Commonwealth, and in that society India is a star."

Earl Winterton (Conservative) said that for years he had heard the kind of speeches they had had to-day about giving India her freedom. There was only one thing that prevented India governing herself—lack of agreement between the Muslims and the Hindus. Until that agreement came, there would be no self-government for India.

Again and again he had been asked by Muslims why the Socialist party invariably took the part of the Hindus against the Muslims, Jews and Arabs. Why, he asked were Labour members so intensely imbued with the feeling that the Hindu Congress was the only party to represent the people of India. It was grossly unfair to the great Muslim minority and to the depressed classes. Since the Hindu case was invariably put from the Socialist side of the House, it was only fair that the Muslim case should be put by other members.

Mr. Jinnah had again and again put forward a policy which, whether it was commended or not should be considered by opinion in India. Nothing that the Government or the House of Commons could do could possibly lead to any solution until leaders of

the Hindu Congress and the Muslim League came to terms.

He thought these proposals offered an opportunity of coming to terms. But quite a number of leaders of the Congress and of Muslims did not want a settlement. They did not believe they would hold their positions if the British left, but would be kicked out by people more to the left who disliked the Congress, regarding it as an engine of Big Business.

India had had a number of opportunities and invariably had failed to take them. There was a considerable measure of agreement in Parliament, but the rights of other classes than Hindus must not be ignored. The Muslims and Jews and others must have a fair deal.

## CRIPPS'S SHARE IN PROPOSALS

THE Labour Party leader, Sir Stafford Cripps, commenting on the India White Paper, said on June 15:

"This plan was worked out during the life of the National Government at the suggestion of the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, and is one for which I accept my full share of responsibility."

Sir Stafford Cripps, who was speaking at a Labour Party meeting, added: "I hope most earnestly that what is proposed will prove acceptable in India and will succeed in bringing a new spirit of co-operation into the relations between the British and Indian peoples."



SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

### Difficult Problem.

"Ever since my visit to India in 1942, I have hoped that some way might be found toward a solution of this difficult problem, and I have done my best to help in resolving the impasse,

which has gradually increased in severity since the autumn of 1942. I am particularly delighted that the Secretary of State has been able to announce the release of members of the Congress Working Committee from detention, and I hope that all other political detainees will quickly gain their freedom at the hands of the Central and Provincial Governments of India.

"These releases will mark the end of one of the three chapters of our relationship with India and will provide an opportunity for vigorous Indian leadership, which alone can solve India's problems of reconstruction.

"I welcome wholeheartedly the suggestions which have been put forward in the White Paper." Sir Stafford said, "They may not appear to be spectacular in terms of legislation, but they are indeed far-reaching adjustments of the constitutional position. In the same way, British India will be able to

nominate its own representatives to international conferences—a factor which may be of the greatest importance in the settlement problems arising out of the Far Eastern war.

“There is a further important step announced by Mr. Amery, and that is the appointment of a British High Commissioner in India to represent British interests. This will emphasise the Viceroy’s position as the head of the Indian Government and will save him the embarrassment of trying to represent both sides in any economic or similar matter in dispute.

“Now this will constitute a very real advance if the suggestions put forward are acceptable to Indian leaders, because for the first time the Central Government of India will be practically entirely composed of representative Indians, and that fact alone must bring about a complete alteration in the balance of power which has hitherto existed between British and Indians.

“It is not possible in the existing circumstances to make the Viceroy’s Executive responsible to the Central legislature. To suggest such a course with the existing legislature would be to wreck our chances of success, for the great minorities would be alarmed at the prospect of a permanent racial

and religious majority controlling the Central Government, and this would make impossible a scheme which requires the consent of the majority and minority parties.

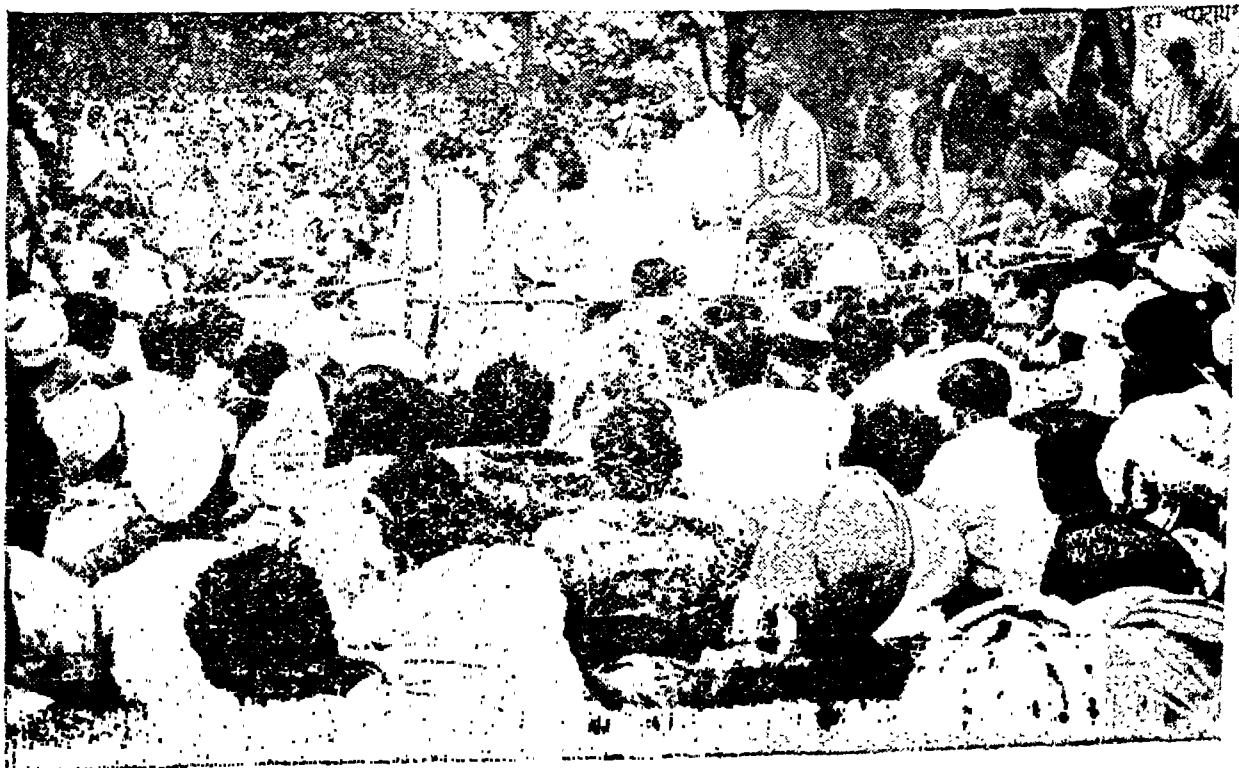
#### Viceroy’s Executive.

“The composition of the Viceroy’s Executive is to be worked out by him in consultation with the leaders of the Indian parties and communities and he will have to nominate suitable persons to act on his Executive. From these nominees he will make his recommendations to the Crown for appointment. The objective is to obtain a balanced representation of the main communities, including equal proportions of Muslims and caste Hindus.

“It is to be hoped, and indeed we can, I am sure, anticipate, if this scheme goes through that Indian ministries will be formed once, again in all provinces.

“The British Parliament will still retain its ultimate responsibility, as it must do until a new constitution is worked out. That is unavoidable, but with the present temporary constitutional change, if it is agreed to by Indian leaders, it is quite obvious that there will be a great shift of power from the British Parliament and Government to the new Executive Council of the Viceroy, which, for the

MAHATMA GANDHI LEADS A PRAYER MEETING AT SIMLA



first time, will be representative of the Indian peoples.

"That is really an important factor in the new proposals. They do provide a marked step forward for self-government and a much better opportunity for the fullest co-operation between Indians of all religions and parties and the British in achieving those final steps which still remain to be taken to accomplish the complete freedom of India.

"I have always been convinced, and all my recent experience has reinforced me in that conviction, that Britishers must make it plain beyond any possibility of doubt that our one desire is to assist our Indian friends in every way that we can to work out with the utmost expedition their new constitution for a free India. These proposals are, I believe, a step in that direction.

"We must not have either in our policies or in our minds any reservation of a selfish kind as to our commercial, industrial or financial interests in India. Such things must not be allowed to stand in the way of the desired progress to self-government for a single moment.

### Questions for negotiation

"All such questions can be taken up with the new Indian Government of India when it is formed and negotiated as between equals in the comity of nations.

"Our country needs to retain the friendship of India. None but the most out-of-date reactionaries could imagine that we could accomplish that end by duress and force. The days for such an attitude, if ever they existed, have now passed away. We can no more compel India to act towards us in a friendly and co-operative spirit than can the French force Syria or the Lebanon into friendship with themselves. Our one hope of maintaining our trade connection with the Indian

people is by assuring ourselves of their friendship.

"There is, I believe, still time to maintain and strengthen that friendship, and I am certain that that is the earnest desire of the British people."

### Friendship as equals

"Despite all our misunderstandings and difficulties, despite all we may have done inadvisedly in the past, the Indian leaders are still, I believe, prepared to extend to us their friendship, provided that it is as equals. It is that equal friendship that I so ardently seek and desire.

"In a world where there is so much conflict and in which the future must so greatly depend upon our capacity to arrive at a better understanding and appreciation of the views and desires of other peoples, it is of the greatest importance that we should do our utmost to preserve the friendship of the peoples of the Indian continent by an intelligent and enlightened policy of co-operation in the achievement of their freedom.

"Although my mission in 1942 brought no immediate success in its train, I hope and believe that I still have many friends in India who know that I have done my best to advance the realisation of Indian self-government.

"To all those friends I would most earnestly appeal for co-operation in the new joint effort of Indians and the British as equals determined, to find a way out of our difficulties. In whatever position I may find myself after this election, I shall continue to exert all the influence I can command, in co-operation with my Indian friends, to bring about the complete self-government of India. That is my goal and for that I shall work".



# BRITISH REACTIONS

At a conference with foreign journalists on June 19, Mr. Herbert Morrison, Chairman of the Labour Party Election Campaign Committee, said that at the moment the British parties were in agreement on policy in regard to India.

that the door has been unlocked, the Indian people through their various organizations will respond to the new invitation and make a determined attempt to solve their own problems in a way that will be satisfactory to India and will promote her freedom and prosperity.

“WE agreed on the Cripps plan and we agree on the Wavell plan. The next move is up to the Indians. I cannot answer for them,” he added.

Mr. Morrison thought that it was time Indians had a definite policy and were ready to talk “practical business.” “I am getting just a little bit worried about the Indian attitude when they have had handsome offers made to them,” he said in reply to a question.

Mr. Morrison said that he hoped that India would remain in the British Commonwealth and Empire. “I shall strive for that,” he added. “India can always rely upon the cordial sympathy of the British Labour Party towards self-government.”

## (ii) A. V. Alexander.

Former First Lord of the Admiralty and one of the leaders of the Labour Party, Mr. A. V. Alexander, said that in his view the Indian issue, which had been in abeyance for weeks during Lord Wavell's visit to London had been forced by Mr Ernest Bevin's forth-right assertion that the Tories could not have gone to the election without making some move on India.

## (iii) Mr. Arther Greenwood

Mr. Arthur Greenwood Leader of the Opposition during the Coalition, who consistently kept the Indian issue before his party colleagues, said: “I sincerely hope that now

## (iv) Mr. G. B. Shaw

Mr. George Bernard Shaw declined to comment on the new proposals, but made a typical Shavian remark about the release of the Congress leaders.

“India is not my business,” he said. “In 1942 I said that Congress leaders should not have been imprisoned and if they are now released, I have nothing more to say.”

## (v) Lord Strabolgi

Lord Strabolgi speaking at a Labour Party meeting in London, said that the attempt to break the political deadlock in India by Lord Wavell was welcome and deserved success as a step forward towards Indian self-government, even though it could have been taken and should have been taken, a

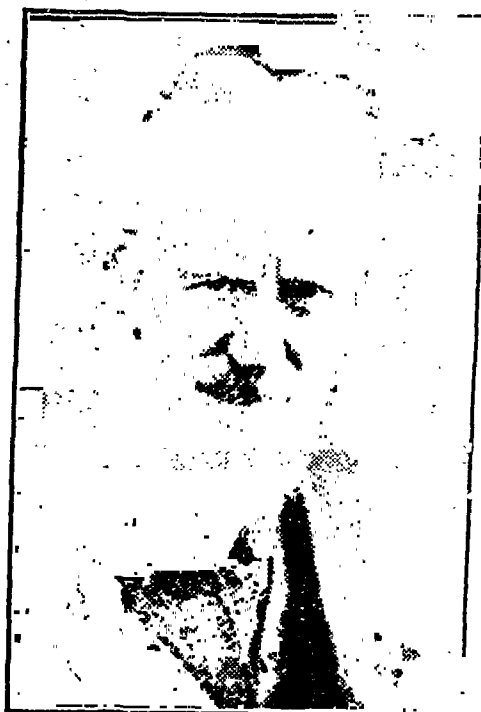
year and a half or two years ago. It was partial recognition of the great services of Indian soldiers and sailors in this war.

Lord Strabolgi added that he would have liked to see India given the title and status of a Dominion right away and Indian affairs transferred to the Dominions Office.

## (vi) Dame Maude Royden

Dame Agnes Maude Royden, the well-known religious leader and a close student of Indian affairs, said: “I am very pleased that the British Government has decided on this action at last.”

“As far as the Hindu-Muslim deadlock is concerned,” she said “I suppose it is no good



MR. G. B. SHAW

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## London Press Awaits India's Verdict.

**THE Times :** During the next few days, leaders of political India will be engaged in examining the British proposals for the transformation of the government. The burden of responsibility placed upon them is heavy. It involves nothing less than the future of their country. In the view of India's best friends in Britain, the formation of an interim national government on the lines suggested, in addition to its immediate practical advantages, would open up a straight road to national autonomy. Such a Government would familiarise Indian statesmen with the internal and external tasks which demand solution; it would afford an opportunity for arriving at a communal settlement, for agreeing upon the principles of a new constitution and for drafting the practical terms of a future treaty with Britain. It would enable genuine progress to be made in economic and social policy with the assurance that the plans would be carried on without break by the Government that will inherit power from the proposed transitional regime.

It must be recognised, however, that Britain and India will apply somewhat different criteria to the project now under examination. The British people with their long experience of political evolution and the part played by compromise in a democratic government are disposed to believe that real progress is possible among Indians themselves upon the principles which are to form the basis of the future constitution. Indian opinion, which most of all is concerned with the national status of India and looks first for unqualified evidence of Britain's admission of the right to full independence, will judge the proposals primarily by the measure in which they assist its realisation. There is no necessary clash between these two approaches. The present scheme both offers the only prospect of reaching an agreement in India on Indian domestic issues and guarantees India an enhanced national status which will arise from her conducting her own internal affairs and external relations. Had this status been offered to India as a substitute for self-government,

Indian leaders would have been justified in refusing it. But it is specifically designed to bring self-government within immediate reach. It is the purpose underlying the scheme as well as the scheme itself which Indian leaders must weigh. The welcome which has been accorded to the scheme in Britain irrespective of party affiliations rests upon the conviction that it will lead quickly and directly to India's independence. The determination of the British people to satisfy the aspiration of India has much impressed those few Indians of eminence who have been able recently to visit Britain. It is perhaps unfortunate that the national leaders in whose hands the decision now rests have had no opportunity of estimating its strength for themselves.

**The Daily Herald :** Under the new plan all Members—Ministers as they are, in fact—would be chosen from "leaders of Indian Political life" with a just balance between Muslims, Hindus and other communities. One exception would be that the Commander-in-Chief would retain for the duration of the war full authority over the armed forces. As a counter-balance the control of external affairs—now under the Viceroy—would be vested in an Indian who would in effect be the Foreign Secretary.

What response will the various leaders make to Lord Wavell's invitation to meet him and consider the plan? We hope the response will be whole-hearted. Mr. Amery's long obstinacy and senseless prolongation of the imprisonment of Congress leaders may very well have exasperated our friends in India. But we feel it necessary to tell them that the British people who long wanted to work with them as partners in the making of a new world expect that they will readily seize upon this opportunity to prepare in advance for the realisation of full independence. The difficulties ahead are formidable. The misunderstandings of the past are a dark memory. But neither the difficulties nor hurt feelings can override the fact that India has a tremendous part to play in the moulding of

a new world and that the acceptance of this offer would enable India all the sooner to play her part. An ending of the political deadlock, which has been a deadlock of formulas only, never in recent memory a deadlock between the peoples of the two countries—would stimulate the cause of freedom throughout the world.

**The Yorkshire Post:** Widespread approval will be given in this country to the Government's admirable new attempt to improve the political situation in India. As the Viceroy emphasises, decision by the Congress and Muslim leaders to form this interim Government and work together for the good of India, will in no way prejudice the final constitutional settlement. But co-operation by representatives of the main political groups in the prosecution of the war against Japan and the tasks of post-war development might well help to promote greater mutual confidence among Indian parties and so greatly expedite discussions on the vexed problem of framing a permanent constitution for British India.

Lord Wavell emphasises the point that the present proposals are intended to make the long-term solution easier. The fact that this further initiative has been taken by the British Government should provide an adequate answer to those who suggest that Britain is careful to foster communal differences in India for her own ends. It is in itself the best possible evidence that as the Viceroy claims, there is the most genuine desire on the part of all responsible leaders in the United Kingdom to help India towards her goal. No pressure is being used. The British Government remains firm in its honourable intention not to introduce any change contrary to the wishes of the major Indian communities. But an opportunity is being placed before representative Indians both to enable their country to make a valuable step forward towards self-government and strengthen her international prestige and influence.

**The Manchester Guardian:** If Indians are as tired of the political deadlock as most people are over here, they will accept the chance now offered to them of getting the wheels of self-government turning again. If Indian leaders could bring themselves to accept the scheme, we firmly believe that it would produce so drastic a change from bureaucracy to politics in the management of Indian affairs that the road to full home rule

would become unexpectedly short and smooth.

Majority decisions will normally determine the policy of the Government of India—but under the 1935 Act the Viceroy retains the power to overrule his Council if 'the safety, tranquillity or interests of British India are essentially affected'. Much will turn on this point. Remembering the long barren controversy on the same subject in relation to provincial autonomy in 1937, which was so easily settled in the end by a simple assurance, it seems a pity that Lord Wavell, instead of insisting sternly on his prerogative and adding lightly that it would 'of course' not be used unreasonably, could not have taken the first point for granted and reassured India firmly on the second. Nearly a hundred years ago a French traveller in India observed that the British rule was 'just but not amiable'. That failing has dogged our imperial steps ever since and the new approach again suffers from it. What is the good of making a political stand on points which are bound to be waived in the end?

Assurance on the Viceroy's veto is one and the exclusion of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru from the Simla meeting is another. There is as Lord Wavell says in his broadcast 'on all sides something to forgive and forget'. We may feel that Indians ought to appreciate the honesty of our struggle to set them on their path as a free nation. But can we really expect them to take so much for granted? They may well point to Mr. Churchill's election manifesto with its ominous references to 'those friends who stood by us in our hour of peril' and its heavily laboured caution in regard to India's future constitution. If we want Indian leaders to take office, as we must hope they will on our solemn assurance that office will mean real power, then we must go out of our way to convince them. We stand at the opening of the greatest political disengagement action the world has ever seen. A century ago Lord Durham in his famous report on Canada prescribed for the first time home rule as a cure for rebellion and the British people have learned much since that first experiment. Whether we part with India as friends or enemies will not merely mark the entire British association with India as a success, or a failure, it will determine the future of this country as a world power. But let our Indian friends remember for their part that they will bear a heavy responsibility if the peaceful development of this imperial

separation should be thwarted by pride or prejudice.

**The Scotsman :** The proposed scheme does not prevent the ultimate development of responsible government if Indians wish it. The Cripps Offer of 1942 stands in its entirety. Mr. Amery was right in saying that the plan now suggested gives the utmost progress practicable within the present constitution. It is inconceivable that in the long run the Viceroy could exclude from his executive a politician whose presence on it was demanded by Indian opinion. Legal reservations of power cannot disguise the fact that under the system Indians would have a dominant political influence. Finance, Home Affairs, and even Foreign Affairs would be in their hands. It is greatly to be hoped that Indians will accept this offer. The release of members of the Congress Working Committee who have been in detention is an earnest of the Government's conciliatory purpose. The only condition suggested is that Indians should co-operate loyally in bringing the war against Japan to a successful conclusion. That is as much in India's interest as in the interest of this country and even Mr. Gandhi seems to be coming to that conclusion.

If the plan were adopted, its further development would be watched with interest. It presupposes a form of Coalition Government at the centre and Lord Wavell clearly hopes that there would also be Coalitions in the Provinces. Such a system may be difficult to maintain because the Executive Council would tend to be divided and not to act as a unit. But the reason for insisting on a Coalition is to prevent injustice to the minorities. Hence the decision that Muslims and Caste Hindus should be equally balanced on the Executive Council. The new offer gives Indians a great opportunity for political development if they will only grasp it.

**The Glasgow Herald :** At the time of the Cripps Mission, most of the prominent Indian leaders found themselves unable to face the responsibility of office. If they are now of a different mind the conference at Simla should herald a new day for India.

In other respects the outlook may be described as greatly more hopeful. Mr. Nehru and his colleagues are at liberty after a long confinement which was at no time unavoidable. The events of the war, the brilliant record of the Indian Army in the field to

which Lord Wavell pays an unstinted tribute and the extraordinary achievement of India in war production and organisation—these combine to make an invaluable basis and background for a renewed effort. It is now for Indian leaders to take hold of their country's future and to shape it.

**The Daily Telegraph :** There is no need to stress again what has so often been stressed that the political parties in this country are unanimous in their desire to see India a self-governing Dominion within the British Commonwealth.

The offer which Sir Stafford Cripps took to India in 1942 still stands ; as soon as a workable constitution which genuinely safeguards minority interests is devised in India, where alone it can be devised, it will be eagerly approved here.

Meanwhile, the changes which Lord Wavell will attempt to put into force provide the possibility of an important advance towards full self-government and towards the transfer of all executive authority to Indians who truly represent their fellows. Whether this advance takes place will depend on the degree of co-operation which Lord Wavell receives from Indian political leaders.

**The News Chronicle :** Lord Wavell has invited the chief political spokesmen of British India to a conference in Simla which is to consider a project so widening the Viceroy's Executive Council that—except for the Viceroy himself and the Commander-in-Chief—all its members will be Indians. The Cripps Offer of 1942 still stands. The people of India are free to determine for themselves the constitutional future of their country. Lord Wavell has taken an essential step forward. The Simla conference, if all goes well will bring full self-government for India well within sight.

**The Daily Mail :** The interim measure now proposed by Lord Wavell will stand before the world as a token of British good faith. What is proposed is that the Viceroy's Executive Council shall be composed of Indians, with the exception of the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy himself. If these proposals are accepted, the important portfolios of Finance and Home Affairs, hitherto in European hands, would be held by Indians. So also would the Department of External Affairs, which has been the direct charge of

the Viceroy.

Here indeed, is a gesture of good will. It is reinforced by the decision to release those Congress leaders still detained for their part in the disturbances of 1942 and by the promise that it in no way prejudices arrangements for a permanent Indian constitution.

It now remains for Indian leaders and parties to respond to this overture and to try to compose communal differences which have always been the real stumbling block to India's political advance.

**The Economist:** The length of Lord Wavell's stay in this country had begun to cause misgiving, lest it might mean disagreement between the Viceroy and the Cabinet. Subsequent relief testified to the general satisfaction that as a first step the Wavell plan fairly reflected popular feeling in the country at large. Although it is probable that the offer would have been slower in coming were Britain not on the eve of a General Election and were the "Care-taker" Government not anxious to have the best case to put to the electors, yet it is in general true that the temptations of vote catching have been resisted and that the Viceroy's action was related at least as closely to the pattern of Indian politics as it was to those of an eve-of-election Britain. Nor are Britain and India the only countries concerned; Indian independence has become a matter of international politics and from this angle the offer has a double welcome, as an earnest of Britain's sincerity towards Indian independence and of its readiness, so often under suspicion, to maintain her reputation for liberalism as well as for strength.

The transitional nature of these changes has been emphasised both by the Viceroy and by Mr. Amery. It is only by looking at them this way that their place in the perspective of Indian political development can be truly appreciated. In sum the Wavell Plan is an attempt to get back to the road towards Dominion Status from which Indian affairs have digressed since 1939. But the new proposals, like the Cripps Offer of 1942, recognise that there can be no simple return to the conditions of 1939. Too much has happened in the intervening years. In particular, the growth of the Pakistan movement has made it impossible to envisage a Central Government of all-India elected by a majority vote and if the implementation of Part Two of the 1935 Act had not been made

impossible by the Congress withdrawal, it would have been ruled out by the new attitude of the Muslims.

The Wavell proposals are not, however, a mere repetition of the Cripps plan. For one thing the external circumstances are quite different. The Cripps Offer was made—with over-anxious haste—in 1942 and there is now no suspicion that Britain needs to buy India off with promises to protect herself against the Japanese. Since then, too, the ultramontane exposition of communal differences has led only to bitterness and frustration. Attempt after attempt to find a solution has at last brought both sides closer to realising that concessions must be made if the common aim of independence is ever to be achieved.

Thus while the Cripps proposal tried to tempt Indian leaders over the transitional gap by fixing attention on a post-war constitution in which they did not wholly believe and on which in any case they did not agree, the Wavell Plan now concentrates on the transitional gap leaving it to the leaders' common-sense to see that it is only a possible stepping stone towards their final objective, whatever that may be. The Cripps Offer looked beyond the 1935 Act to a new Constitution; the Wavell Plan makes the last extension of self-rule possible under the Act in the hope that this itself will lead smoothly to the first steps towards a new Act.

This is firmly stated in the White Paper and by Mr. Amery. The proposals plainly refuse to go further, just because to do so would involve decisions giving bias to the new Constitution. Unquestionably the smooth working of a joint Hindu-Muslim administration presents the greatest hope for a way out of India's difficulties. Underlying every problem of Indian Government, even the ticklish problem of balancing political power between the communities, there is today the desperate urgency of economic reconstruction. Popular enthusiasm in India for speedy industrial and agricultural development has been reflected in increasing attention which the present Executive Council, led by Lord Wavell, has given to economic matters. As plans of development from both private and official sources have been made public and scrutinised, the overriding advantages to be gained from a political coherence to match the economic needs of the whole country have been increasingly appreciated. This is where the

interim Government may serve a useful purpose, always provided it does not founder on supposed insults or lose contact with the sources of power and opinion whom it is supposed jointly to represent. By working together in day to day harness, Muslims and Hindus may just conceivably be persuaded to widen the limits of authority that their communities will concede to an all-India Government and to extend representation of Muslims and other minorities to ensure political peace, on which the whole structure of government would rest. If any such result is, in the next few vital years to come, even within the

bounds of possibility, its gradual development will demand more than considerable tact from the Viceroy and more luck than can fairly not be expected. Unfortunately, passions and prejudices which have been conjured on all sides during the backsliding years of war will not be easy to dissipate. Certainly there have recently been signs of greater willingness among the leaders of communities to find an agreed solution. But extreme policies, maintained with such apparently unshakable convictions, are not going to be lightly discarded.

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PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AT SIMLA. YOUTHFUL AT 56,  
HE IS THE HERO OF YOUNG INDIA.



# VICEROY-GANDHI CORRESPONDENCE

**T**he following correspondence was exchanged between H. E. the Viceroy and Mr. M. K. Gandhi.

**Telegram dated June 14, 1945, from H. E. the Viceroy to Mr. M. K. Gandhi :**

You may have heard my broadcast this evening. The text and that of the Secretary of State's simultaneous announcement in Parliament will appear in newspapers tomorrow.

2. I hope you will agree to attend the Conference which I have proposed. have suggested 11 a.m. on 25th June at Viceregal Lodge, Simla, for the first meeting.

3. If you accept my invitation I should welcome a discussion with you before the opening of the Conference and suggest, subject to your convenience, three p.m. on the 24th June at Viceregal Lodge, Simla.

4. I have arranged to make a bungalow, called Armsdell, available for you in the hope that you will accept.

**Telegram dated June 14, from Mr. Gandhi to the Viceroy:**

Have read in Viceregal broadcast my name mentioned as an invitee. I have repeatedly made clear that I represent no institution. Therefore, I must not attend as representing Congress. That function belongs to the Congress President or whomsoever he nominates. I send earliest intimation in order avoid misunderstandings or misconception.

**Telegram dated June 15, from the Viceroy to Mr. Gandhi:**

Thanks for your telegram of 14th. Whatever the technical position may be, I shall value your help and hope you will accept invitation which was telegraphed to you last night. As regards representation of Congress perhaps you will kindly let me have your final views after further consideration and any consultations you think necessary. I know you will appreciate the importance and difficulty of the task I have undertaken and do all you can to help.

**Telegram dated June 15, from Mr. Gandhi to His Excellency:**

Received kind wire of invitation. For reasons given in my wire sent you last night I have no

place in your Conference. As an individual I can only tender advice. May I then say that there are no caste and casteless Hindus who are at all politically minded. Therefore the word rings untrue and offensive. Who will represent them at your table? Not Congress which seeks to represent without distinction all Indians who desire and work for Independence. Hence the existence of Hindu Mahasabha claiming to represent Hindus as such. I apprehend that even that body will declaim representing caste Hindus. Moreover broadcast seems rigorously to exclude use of word Independence. Accordingly it seems to me to demand revision to bring it in line with modern Indian thought. I suggest publication of our wires.

**Telegram dated June 16, from Mr. Gandhi to the Viceroy:**

In reply your kind wire of yesterday am posting letter.

**Telegram dated June 16 from His Excellency to Mr. Gandhi:**

Many thanks for your telegram of 15th June. I have also seen your statement in to-day's newspapers.

2. As regards your attendance at the Conference I will await your letter referred to in your telegram of June 16th which I have just received.

3. I assure you term "Caste Hindu" was not used with offensive intention. Meaning is that there should be equality between Muslims and Hindus other than members of Scheduled Castes. Subject to this, exact composition of Council would of course have to be decided after discussion at conference.

4. On question of independence I invite your attention to Secretary of State's speech to Parliament on 14th June as published in Indian Press. Following is relevant passage. BEGINS. The offer of March 1942 stands in its entirety. That offer is based on two main principles. First, no limit is set to India's freedom to decide her own destiny whether as a free partner in the Commonwealth or even without it. Second, that this can only be achieved under a constitution or constitutions framed by Indians to which the main elements are consenting parties. ENDS.



5. It would not be practicable to modify the terms of my broadcast. It is only a simple statement of the proposals approved by His Majesty's Government, and my intention is to deal at the Conference itself with any points requiring clarification. I do not think it advisable to enter into detailed discussion before the Conference which I hope, as you do yourself, will be held in a friendly atmosphere and without party bitterness.

6. As you suggest I am releasing our telegrams to the Press.

**Letter dated June 16, from Mr. Gandhi to H. E. the Viceroy:**

Dear friend,

I thank you for your telegram of yesterday received at 3.45 p.m. My second telegram acknowledging your kind telegraphic invitation evidently crossed yours. I am sending you this letter in reply, instead of wiring, because I am anxious that you should understand my position thoroughly. However, I am sending you a wire intimating the despatch of this letter. For ready reference, I am enclosing herewith a copy of my press message (appeared in newspapers of June 16), which was issued yesterday in the morning. I would like you to go through it.

#### **Mr. Gandhi Explains.**

While it is true that my position is technical, the reality of it is truer. My official and legal connection with the Congress was deliberately, and with the consent of the All-India Congress Committee, severed in order to enable me all the better to serve the common cause. This position, therefore, cannot be changed at will. In the forthcoming official conference, I can have no official position. My presence in it will change the official colour, unless I become an official representative of the Congress. But if you think that my help is desirable and that without being a member of the conference I am likely to be useful, I shall make it a point to be at your service before and even during the conference proceedings, assuming, of course, that the Working Committee wishes likewise.

I want to cite an analogy. You may have known the late Deenabandhu as C. F. Andrews was affectionately called by us. He severed his official connection with the Cambridge Mission and the Church in order to serve religion, India and humanity better. The position he occupied as a valuable link

between India and England, whether official or non-official and between all classes and parties, grew as days went. If I can, I would love to occupy such a position. It may never come to me. Man can but try.

You have suggested further consideration and consultation, both of which I have done. I am within an easy distance of Yervada Central Prison, where Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Shri Shankarrao Deo were recently transferred from Ahmednagar Fort. Almost immediately after their discharge from the jail yesterday they motored to Panchgani and are still with me. I have shown them all the necessary papers and they concur with me in what I am writing.

In the task you have undertaken, of which I hope I fully appreciate the difficulty and delicacy, you certainly need the assistance and goodwill of all the parties you can. The Congress help you naturally cannot have without the Congress being officially represented at your table. The first and also perhaps the main purpose of the discharge of the remaining members of the Working Committee will be frustrated unless you secure the presence at your table of the President of the Congress or whomsoever he and his Committee may appoint for the purpose. If my supposition is correct, my immediate advice is that you should invite the President of the Congress. I expect that the ban on the Congress has been or will be lifted to the extent it still exists.

I am,

Yours Sincerely

M. K. Gandhi.

#### **Telegram dated June 17, from the Viceroy to Mr. Gandhi:**

Thank you for your letter of 16th June. I understand your position. I am looking forward to seeing you on 24th and hope means may be found for you to take part in proceedings of Conference. I shall be grateful if you will communicate following message to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from me. **Message Begins.** I invite you to attend or to nominate duly authorised representative to attend Conference at Viceregal Lodge Simla at 10-30 a.m. on Monday 25th June. Accommodation will be arranged for representative if required. **Message ends.** I have not released your letter or this telegram to the Press, but have no objection to their being published.



**Telegram dated June 17, from Mr. Gandhi to His Excellency:**

Deeply appreciate your wire received yesterday evening. In order regularise procedure and facilitate despatch of work without disturbing number of Members Conference I suggest immediate invitation to Congress President attend Conference or depute Congress nominee. If fixity of parity between Caste Hindus and Muslims unchangeable religious division will become officially stereotyped on eve of independence. Personally I can never subscribe to it nor Congress if I know its mind. In spite of having overwhelmingly Hindu membership Congress has striven to be purely political. I am quite capable advising Congress to nominate all non-Hindus and most decidedly non-Caste Hindus. You will quite unconsciously but equally surely defeat purpose of Conference if parity between Caste Hindus and Muslims is unalterable. Parity between Congress and League understandable. I am eager to help you and the British people but not at sacrifice of fundamental and universal principles. For it will be no help. If you desire text yesterday's letter earlier I can telegraph contents.

**Invitation to Congress President**

**Telegram dated June 17, from Mr. Gandhi to the Viceroy :**

Many thanks your prompt reply to my letter of 16th. But in absence of reply to my wire even date you will admit Congress position and mine remains uncertain. Hence I must not even on your behalf invite President without acceptance of my necessary amendment. You will not and cannot according to your wire of 16th let Conference discuss the question. Therefore to my great regret I have taken no action on your wire under reply. Working Committee has not still been called. Private telegraphic communication tardy. Time appears to be against date fixed by you. With all my willingness to help I hope you will appreciate unavoidable delay. I suggest your altering date and clarifying issue raised by me and if clarification satisfactory sending your invitation directly for avoiding delay. Should inform you Congress Premiers are held up pending Working Committee's decision. I am not releasing these communications pending final decision. But in this you shall judge.

**The Immediate Question**

**Telegram dated June 18, from the Viceroy to Mr. Gandhi:**

Thank you for your two telegrams of yesterday. I think Maulana Abul Kalam Azad should have my invitation as soon as possible, and have accordingly telegraphed it to him at Calcutta.

2. Mr. Amery's statement in Parliament and my broadcast constitute terms of reference to Conference which I still hope will assemble at Simla on 25th. I clearly cannot change my broadcast and I have already told you I do not think it desirable to discuss its details before the Conference. None of the persons or parties concerned is expected or required to accept or reject the proposals now. The only immediate question is whether the proposals are worth discussing at the conference and it is to that question that an answer will be most helpful.

3. I still think the Conference should assemble on 25th. It may last some time and delay before it begins will not improve prospects of success.

4. I am releasing your letter of 16th June my telegram of 17th June your two telegrams of 17th June and this telegram to Press.

**Telegram dated June 18, from Mr. Gandhi to the Viceroy:**

Grateful for your prompt, frank and full reply also for directly inviting Maulana Saheb. Members being free at Conference to accept or reject proposals clears ground for invitees to attend Conference. This leaves them free discuss pros and cons at Conference. My objection to inevitability of parity between Muslims and Caste Hindus stands. If that view incapable of being altered by British Government my advice Congress will be not to participate in formation Executive Council. Congress has never identified itself with Caste or non-Caste Hindus and never can even to gain independence which will be one sided, untrue and suicidal. Congress to justify its existence for winning independence of India must remain for ever free to choose best men and women from all classes and I hope always will. That it has for sake of conciliating Minorities chosen men to represent them though they have been less than best redounds to its credit but that can never be pleaded to justify or perpetuate distinction

*(Continued in page 36 column 2)*

# VICEROY-JINNAH CORRESPONDENCE

Telegram from Lord Wavell, dated New Delhi, June 14—

**Y**OU may have heard my broadcast on Thursday evening. The text and that of the Secretary of State's simultaneous announcement in Parliament will appear in newspapers on Friday. I hope you will agree to attend a Conference which I have proposed. I have suggested 11 a.m. on June 25 at Viceregal Lodge, Simla, for the first meeting.

"If you accept my invitation, I should welcome a discussion with you before opening the Conference; and suggest, subject to your convenience, 5 p. m. on June 24 at Viceregal Lodge, Simla. I have had accommodation reserved for you at the Cecil Hotel in the hope that you will accept. Viceroy.—

## MR. JINNAH'S REPLY

Telegram from Mr. Jinnah to His Excellency Lord Wavell, dated June 15—

"Your invitation of Thursday. Shall be glad to meet you on June 24 for discussion. But, as regards your proposals—particularly the Conference—I require clarification, which I hope will be available at our meeting on the 24th. This will enable me to consult my Working Committee in the light of your clarification and to decide upon our course of action.

"May I request you, therefore, to postpone the date of the Conference for a fortnight, as the time fixed is too short for a meeting of Working Committee members from all over India.

"I reciprocate your appeal for co-operation and goodwill, and hope that the Muslim League will make its contribution to any just and reasonable provisional settlement. Please reply.—Jinnah."

His Excellency the Viceroy, said in reply to Mr. M. A. Jinnah:

"I have now received your telegram to me on June 15. I am grateful for your assurance

of co-operation. My broadcast was a very simple statement of the proposals, and my intention is to deal at the Leaders' Conference itself with any points requiring clarification.

"I do not think it advisable to enter into detailed discussions before the Leaders Conference meets. I would, therefore, prefer to adhere to the date for the opening of the Conference on June 25, and hope that you will attend.

"Perhaps, you could arrange for your Working Committee to meet in Simla. I shall look forward to seeing you on June 24. As your telegram has been published, I am sending this to the Press."

Mr. M. A. Jinnah sent the following telegram to His Excellency the Viceroy:

"I have received your telegram of June 16. I note that your intention is to deal at the Leaders' Conference itself with any points requiring clarification. It, therefore, follows that, till we have a complete picture of your proposals (as details would be no less vital than fundamentals), we shall not be able to deal with them.

"Until I know the full details of the scheme and am in a position to place the entire scheme before my Working Committee, it would serve no useful purpose to convene the meeting. Further, I hope that you will understand that calling a Working Committee meeting in Simla (as suggested by you) on or before June 25 is fraught with difficulties.

"First, they will be kept waiting indefinitely till the Leaders' Conference concludes.

"Second, it would not be easy for me to make arrangements for their suitable accommodation and travel from various provinces within the short time available.

"However, after meeting you on June 24 for discussion (as suggested by you), I may be in a better position to understand the situation and to arrange things accordingly."—Jinnah.



[NO RECENT EVENT HAS EXCITED SO MUCH INTEREST IN INDIA AS THE SIMLA CONFERENCE

## CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETS

The Congress Working Committee met in Bombay after a lapse of nearly three years on June 22 and 23. It issued the following statement on the Wavell proposals :—

THE Working Committee meeting, after nearly three years, has to consider many important problems, both national and international. Members of the Working Committee, just released from prison, have not even had the opportunity to get into touch with our people and to acquaint themselves with the events which have taken place during the last fateful three years. However, in view of the existing circumstances the Committee con-

sidered the proposals made by the Viceroy in regard to the Simla conference fixed for 25th of June and it was decided that the President and other Congressmen invited to the conference be authorised to attend. Certain directions have been given to them and they have been asked to seek elucidation in regard to any matter which still requires clarification. It is probable that the Working Committee will meet again in the near future to consider these and other matters."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wired to the Viceroy accepting his invitation and issued a directive to other Congress invitees to attend the conference.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was given full and plenary powers by the Congress Working Committee to deal with negotiations arising out of Lord Wavell's proposals. Mahatma Gandhi accompanied him in the capacity of an adviser. This role he played throughout the conference. The "Instrument of Instructions", given to the Congress President emphasised the necessity for the Congress to try and combine with all elements invited to the conference in order to evolve a common for-

mula fulfilling the requirements of the Viceroy's broadcast. It appears that the Working Committee raised no serious objection to the political contents of the Viceroy's broadcast, which promised to end the political deadlock and at the same time offered an opportunity of solving immediate problems of vital importance.

There was a consistent note of optimism among Congress invitees on their way to Simla.

## LEADERS MEET VICEROY



MAHATMA GANDHI ON THE WAY TO VICEREGAL LODGE

BY June 24, all the invitees to the Leaders' conference had arrived in Simla. There were other leaders too who, though not invited, were anxious to contribute their mite. They were in Simla in hundreds. No fewer than 130 "special, especial and very special" newspaper correspondents were also on the scene of this great political drama. A large number of them, like the invitees to the conference, were guests of the Viceroy. Never was Simla so full and so surcharged with excitement.

The first act of the drama was the meeting of four leaders with the Viceroy. The first to meet Lord Wavell was the Punjab Premier, Malik Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana on June, 23. He impressed upon the Viceroy the necessity of reserving one Muslim seat for a nominee of the Unionist Party to represent the interests of the martial classes of the Punjab.

BELOW: MAHATMA GANDHI RETURNING FROM VICEREGAL LODGE





ABOVE : PEOPLE INSISTED ON  
TOUCHING THE MAHATMA'S FEET.

RIGHT : THE MAHATMA EMERGING  
FROM VICEREGAL LODGE.



The Congress President, accompanied by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, was the second leader to visit the Viceroy. The interview lasted an hour and a half. As he emerged from the Viceroy's House, the Maulana stated: "I can only say that I placed the Working Committee's view as clearly as I could before the Viceroy."

The same day Mahatma Gandhi too had an interview with the Viceroy. He told Lord

Wavell that it would not be advisable for him to attend the conference as he belonged to no organisation. He, however, promised to stay in Simla for giving advice. The Viceroy accepted the position and requested the Mahatma not to leave Simla until the conference was over.

Last to see the Viceroy was Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah. It was as a result of this interview that he decided to attend the conference.



A SCENE IN THE LAWNS OF VICEREGAL LODGE : VICEROY GREETES LEADERS

## SIMLA CONFERENCE OPENS

**A**T Viceregal Lodge, Simla, the Leaders' Conference opened at 11 a. m. on June 25 to consider His Majesty's Government's proposals for an interim settlement of the Indian political deadlock. All the 21 invitees, representing the

major political parties in the country, were present. Only Mahatma Gandhi abstained from attending the conference.

The Conference held two sessions that day. Adjourning at 1 p. m. it re-assembled at 2-30 p. m.



MALIK KHIZAR HYAT KHAN (LEFT) AND MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD



MR. RAJGOPALACHARI (RIGHT) AND MR. M. A. JINNAH

The Conference opened with a short speech by the Viceroy who was in the chair. The Viceroy said:

"Before we begin on the agenda of this Conference, the outcome of which will have a momentous influence on the destiny of India, I feel there are a few words I should say to you:

"First, I welcome you all as men who by character and ability have risen to leadership in your provinces and parties. I have called you together from all parts of India, at this critical moment in her history, to advise and help me in advancing India towards prosperity, political freedom and greatness. I ask you to give me that help in a spirit of broad co-operation towards the good of India as a whole.

"It is not a constitutional settlement, it is not a final solution of India's complex problems that is proposed. Nor does the plan in any way prejudice or prejudice the final issue. But if it succeeds, I am sure, it will pave the way towards a settlement and will bring it nearer.

"The statesmanship, wisdom and goodwill of all of us is here on trial, not merely in the eyes of India, but before the world. I said in my broadcast that on all sides there was something to forgive and forget. We have got to rise above the level of old prejudices and enmities and of party and sectional advantage and think of the good of India, the good of 400 million people—and how we can best combine to implement these new proposals made by His Majesty's Government for the advancement of India, now and in the future.

"It will not be easy, and unless we can place our deliberations at a high common level, we shall not succeed.

"You must accept my leadership for the present. Until there is some agreed change in the Constitution, I am responsible to His Majesty's Government for the good government and tranquillity of India. I ask you to believe in me as a sincere friend of India. I will endeavour to guide the discussions of this Conference in what I believe to be the best interests of this country.

"On the column which stands in front of the Viceroy's House, crowned by the Star of India, are engraved these words: 'In

thought and faith, in words and wisdom, in deed and courage, in life and service, so may India be great.'

"They will make a good guide for our Conference."

\* \* \*

After the adjournment of the conference the following official communique was issued: "The Conference assembled at Viceregal Lodge, Simla, at 11 a.m. Their Excellencies met and talked to the delegates on the lawn outside the Conference room.

"At 11-20 the delegates moved into the Conference room, and the proceedings began with the Viceroy in the chair.

"H.E. made a short opening speech. He then made a statement on the procedure he proposed for the Conference and announced that he had appointed Sir Evan Jenkins, his Private Secretary, and Rao Bahadur V.P. Menon, Reforms Commissioner, to act as Secretaries to the Conference.

"The Conference then took up the discussion of the general principles of His Majesty's Government's proposals. The discussions continued until 5 p.m. when the Conference adjourned until tomorrow."

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*(Continued from page 30)*

based on caste or creed. Hindu Mahasabha is the body claiming to represent solely Hindu interests. Subject to Working Committee wishes I shall hope present myself Simla on 24th instant but owing to my strong views you can cancel the engagement without least offence. I expect this wire and reply if any will be published. Leaving for Poona Tuesday, 2 p.m.

Telegram dated June 19, from H. E. the Viceroy to Mr. M. K. Gandhi:

Thank you for your telegram of 18th June. I am glad you think ground is clear for invitees to attend Conference. I shall expect to hear further immediately after the meeting on 21st June. I am sure you appreciate that success of Conference depends on a spirit of goodwill and co-operation among all concerned. As you suggest I am releasing these telegrams to the Press.



# DIARY OF EVENTS

**Tuesday, June 26.**

An even more cryptic communique than on the opening day was issued from the Viceroy's House. "The Leaders' Conference met at 11 a.m. on Tuesday. By 12-30 p.m. it had reached certain provisional conclusions and the delegates expressed a wish to confer among themselves. The Conference was accordingly adjourned until 11 a.m. on Wednesday, June 27."

The "provisional conclusions" referred to in the foregoing communique were amplified by press reports. Proposals of His Majesty's Government, it appears, were discussed clause by clause and adopted. All were agreed on the necessity of setting up a Government to deal with post-war reconstruction, industrialisation plans and for fighting Japan into surrender. Retention of Viceroy's veto was not seriously objected to.

Another important point dealt with by the Conference was in regard to war finance and the power and responsibility of the Finance Member in this matter. It appears that the question was left to be decided by the proposed Executive Council. Lord Wavell at this stage was reported to have suggested that the remaining part of the agenda was simple enough and could be set aside for the time being. He asked the Conference to deal with the question of nomination of members for the new Executive Council. The leaders, it is stated, demanded an adjournment to enable them to consult among themselves and their respective party colleagues. This request was accepted and the Conference was adjourned till next day.

\* \* \*

The Congress and the Muslim League utilised this period in an effort to evolve a common formula for submission of panel. It was in furtherance of this aim that Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, ex-Premier of the United Provinces, went to Cecil Hotel that evening to meet Mr. Jinnah. Before visiting Cecil Hotel, Pandit Pant had been to "Manorville", (the residence of Mahatma Gandhi) to consult Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai.

The Jinnah-Pant meeting lasted two hours and 15 minutes. What happened at this



JINNAH-PANT TALKS

meeting was revealed only some days later. Immediately after Pandit Pant's departure Mr. Jinnah was closetted with some of his lieutenants.

While the general trend of newspaper reports on this day was one of optimism, there was one discordant note. This was struck in the columns of the Civil & Military Gazette. Mr. Jinnah, it stated, was bent on having all Muslim members nominated by the Muslim League. As later events proved, this was to be the rock on which the Conference foundered.

The same day an authoritative Unionist spokesman declared that there could be no question of the Punjab Premier agreeing to any arrangement which omitted a nominee of his from the personnel of the proposed Executive Council.

Apparently matters were coming to a head.

**Wednesday, June 27.**

In the Congress camp, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad conferred with the Congress delegates to the Leaders' Conference.

The Conference itself lasted an hour and was adjourned at the request of the Muslim League leader to enable him to continue his talks with the Congress.

Congress-Muslim League negotiations directed towards presenting to the Viceroy an



agreed list of names for the new Executive Council made no progress, though Pandit Pant had a second meeting with Mr. Jinnah lasting 75 minutes.

After their meeting, Mr. Jinnah told a press representative that the negotiations between the Congress and the Muslim League regarding the nomination of a non-Muslim Leaguer for the proposed Executive Council had reached a critical stage. The Muslim League would never accept a position which would take away from it the right to nominate the entire Muslim personnel for the Executive Council. The position was described as a stalemate.

\* \* \*

The Jinnah-Pant meeting was followed by a Viceroy-Jinnah meeting which lasted two and a half hours. On Mr. Jinnah's return to his residence at the Cecil, he held a two-hour meeting with his colleagues. Thus the third day of the Leaders' Conference was marked by tension.

It had been made clear to the delegates that three conditions would govern the selection of personnel of the new Executive Council.

Firstly, in suggesting names, party representatives participating in the Leaders' Conference were to bear in mind that they by themselves did not exhaust all the political interests within the country, and, therefore, they were to take care to provide representation for important sections of political interests which for certain reasons had not been included in the Simla Conference.

Secondly, the Viceroy's right of final selection will be a positive act and not a mere formality.

Thirdly, the team selected must be such as to come up to the requisite standards of competence and cohesion and should be able to work as a team.

#### Thursday, June 28.

It was a day of suspense. It was clear that the Jinnah-Pant talks had failed. The Congress and the League could not agree to compromise. The Congress insisted that there must be two Muslims from outside the League. Mr. Jinnah asserted that the League alone was competent to represent Muslim interests.

Pandit Govind Ballab Pant and some other leaders held informal discussions at the residence of Mr. C. Rajagopalachari. Mr. Jinnah conferred for 90 minutes with Muslim League invitees.

Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad issued a statement. He said: "I am not at this stage in a position to say what the final decision of the Working Committee will be, but I would like to make it clear once again, so that there may be no room for doubt on the point, that the attitude of the Congress is constructive and not destructive."

In his reply to a telegram from the Maharaja of Alwar the Congress President re-iterated this sentiment: "I am doing my best to build rather than destroy."

#### Friday, June 29.

The Leaders' Conference met again at 11 A.M. Maulana Azad and Mr. Jinnah confessed to the Viceroy that they had not been able to come to an agreement on the question of personnel of the Executive Council.

The Viceroy thereupon asked the parties to submit separate lists of nominees to enable him to make the final choice. The lists were to be submitted to him within seven days. The Conference was adjourned to July 14. This long adjournment was made at the request of Mr. Jinnah, who wanted to consult his Working Committee before deciding whether or not he should submit a panel. The League Working Committee was called to meet on July 6.

Maulana Azad also called his Working Committee for July 3. The Congress President got into telephonic communication with Anand Bhavan to summon Pundit Jawaharlal to Simla.

There was no doubt that the Conference had reached a delicate stage. Both the Congress and the League Presidents were apparently unable to make any further commitments without consulting their respective Cabinets.

\* \* \*

For the first time, Mr. Jinnah gave an authoritative interpretation of the League stand at a press conference. He said:

"I want to give you a little background. First, the Muslim League passed its resolution in Delhi in March 1943, and we there formulated our demand. The demand was



MR. JINNAH'S PRESS CONFERENCE : "I WANT TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE BACKGROUND"

that we were always ready to consider any proposals to negotiate with any party on the basis of equality of representation on the provisional Central Government.

"At that time the party meant was the Congress, provided the British Government made a declaration guaranteeing to Muslims the right of self-determination and undertaking to abide by the verdict of Muslims to give effect to the Pakistan scheme in accordance with the principles outlined in the Lahore Resolution of the All India Muslim League in 1940.

"The Wavell proposals do not concede or accord with the declaration referred to. Both the Viceroy's broadcast and the announcement by the Secretary of State contain certain negative assurances.

"The Secretary of State for India said as follows : 'At the present juncture this is only

possible on an interim and provisional basis. It must be without prejudice to the ultimate constitutional settlement. The ideal to which we have always looked forward is that of an all-India union in which the States would play their full part.

"At the same time we have also recognised that the possibility of an agreement between Hindus and Muslims on any form of Indian unity may be unattainable. Any interim advance, therefore, must in no way prejudice the question whether the ultimate settlement is based on a united or a divided India.

"The Wavell proposals have, for their basis, laid down parity between Hindus, other than the Scheduled Castes, and Muslims. We have no illusions about this parity because on the Executive Council, as proposed, the Muslim quota will not be more than one-third, and in the whole of the Executive

Council, Muslims will be in a minority of one-third.

"Whereas the Hindu quota will be in parity with Muslims, there will be the Scheduled Caste representation, and Sikh representation and we do not know yet which other community or communities will secure representation, because the strength of the new Executive Council has yet to be determined. So is the case with regard to the composition which is yet to be determined.

"Now, as regards the Scheduled Castes, their real grievance is of social tyranny and economic oppression in Hindu society, but with regard to their political ideal or political goal, it is the same so far as Scheduled Castes are concerned.

"So, the representative or representatives of the Scheduled Castes will not have any particular bias for us, although we have the fullest sympathy with them and we shall always be ready and willing to help them to improve their position socially and economically.

"Therefore, it follows that the Congress will on many important matters be safely entitled to count on their support.

"As regards Sikh representation, they are already opposed to dividing India and their political ideal or goal is the same as those of the Congress. And so they are not likely to have any particular bias for us.

"As to any other communities I do not know yet.

"Then, there will be two British members, the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy. The composition of this Council will, therefore, be such as to enable the Congress invariably to command majority.

"I know the Viceroy's veto is there and I know that Mr. Amery says that the veto will be exercised to protect minorities but also I know that the Governor-General and the Viceroy will be placed in a very invidious position if he were to exercise the veto constantly and as a normal business.

"The powers and functions of the proposed Executive Council are stated by Mr. Amery as follows in presenting the White Paper in the House of Commons.

"There is nothing in the proposals, if accepted, that will debar members of the Council from dealing with the whole problem of reconstruction entirely as they please. It will be for them to decide the industrial, agricultural and health policies and so on.

"It will be in their power, so far as British India is concerned, to decide who is to represent her as Ministers in foreign capitals, and in which capitals India wishes to be represented. The proposals, if accepted, impose no real barrier or check upon India's freedom to pursue her own course, both at home and in the world."

"There are no adequate provisions against the Congress forcing its decisions by a majority vote against the Muslim block. Therefore, we will have to consider how to provide against this position.

"We are willing to make full contribution to any just and reasonable settlement. The Congress has already claimed the right to choose a member or members from the Muslim block and some other party or parties may make similar claims.

"While we have every desire to find a solution and come to an agreement, this point, namely, that the Congress or any other body should be entitled to choose a Muslim from the Muslim block, is one which we cannot accept either on principles or on the facts as they are before us.

"Muslims desire honestly to come to a settlement and not play with facts. And I do not think that it can possibly be denied that 99 per cent of the Muslims of India are with the League. We have not lost a single by-election except one, and that was in the early days of 1937, out of about 70 by-elections.

"The total number of Muslim members in all the provincial legislatures and the Central Legislature is somewhere about 600 and out of them there are only about 30 who are Congressite Muslims and who happened to be in one or other provincial legislature.

"I am told that in the Central Legislature, there is not a single Congressite Muslim from a Muslim electorate. There are two Muslims who have been returned by joint electorates. We maintain, therefore, that the Muslim League alone and nobody else is entitled to give the names for the entire Muslim block to the Viceroy.

"There cannot be unanimity in this world. I do not think you will find it anywhere.

"There are handful of Muslims who are outside the League and there are Muslims who are in the Congress. But how many? I am true to say at the most a few hundred.

"I think, one of the newspapers, when it was being argued that there are Muslims in the

Congress, said that one swallow does not make an Indian summer.

"Nor do a few hundred Muslims in the Congress make the Congress either a body representative of India as a whole or support its claim to have a voice in the selection of the members of the Muslim block."

"I do hope that when the full scheme has been formulated, it will give us sufficient security, so that it will be acceptable to the Muslim nation that we represent."

In reply to a question, it was stated by Nawabzada Liaquat Ali, who was present, that the number of members elected on the League ticket throughout the Indian legislatures was about 420 out of a total of 600.

\* \* \*

By now it was freely bruited about that the Viceroy would bypass the League if Mr. Jinnah stuck to his view. The Associated Press of America, however, reported that according to League spokesmen this was not likely to happen. They relied on the British Government's declarations that no Government would be formed without the consent of the League and the Congress. A new declaration by Parliament would be necessary if the League were to be excluded.

\* \* \*

Mahatma Gandhi in an interview with the Associated Press of America made the following points:—

- (1) The Congress is not a communal body and can never become a sectional organisation.
- (2) The Congress is the only organisation that has tried to think and act in terms of the whole nation.
- (3) The Congress entered these negotiations with the hope of setting up an interim Government which will be the first step towards independence.
- (4) If Mr. Jinnah wanted him to attend the conference, he could force him to do so.

Answering a request that he should give a report on the negotiations as they stood at the moment, Mahatma Gandhi said: "I wish I could, but I am here only as an adviser. I have for years been advising the Congress, but now I have constituted myself as both adviser to the Congress and an adviser to the Viceroy and through him to the British people. That makes my position exceptionally delicate."

\* \* \*

Mr. Jinnah in an interview proposed that Mahatma Gandhi should drop the present conference and work out with the Muslim League a new agreement in which Pakistan should be an accepted arrangement.

"If Mahatma Gandhi will accept the basis of Pakistan, we need not trouble about this conference," Mr. Jinnah stated.

Side by side then, Mr. Jinnah said, the Congress and the Muslim League could work to achieve freedom and independence for "all the peoples of India."

In a sense it was an invitation to resume the talks which Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah held last autumn in an effort to arrive at a mutual agreement on setting up a national Government for India.

Replying to a statement made by Mahatma Gandhi in the foregoing interview in which he stated that if Mr. Jinnah wanted him at the Viceroy's Conference, he could make him come by simply calling for him, Mr. Jinnah said:

"Mr. Gandhi was invited by the Viceroy as the recognised leader of one of the two main political parties, namely, the Congress, but he declined." Mr. Jinnah added: "Even in his interview he says the Congress is legally represented and, therefore, he can have no place in it. How can I take him to the Conference, when he says he has no place in it?"

Further referring to the Gandhi interview, Mr. Jinnah said. "I entirely agree that, technicality apart, without Mr. Gandhi's consent any arrangements that may be agreed upon will suffer seriously. We know that Mr. Gandhi's advice means almost an order so far as the Congress is concerned. But I notice now that he has constituted himself adviser not only to the Congress but to the Viceroy and through him to the British people."

He then quoted a section of the 1943 League resolution which stated. "The Muslim League, as it has been repeatedly made clear, stands not only for Pakistan and the freedom of Muslims but also for the freedom and independence of Hindustan and the Hindus."

Referring then to the Viceroy's proposals for an interim Government, Mr. Jinnah said: "I wonder whether Mr. Gandhi realises that this interim arrangement will continue until a bigger issue has been settled by an agreement between us, whether it should be a divided India or united India, whether we are to have a constitution or constitutions."

"And, therefore, this preliminary issue of Pakistan must be settled first, and the sooner it is done, the better for all concerned."

**Saturday June 30.**

"If I had my way I would make the interim Government consist of top men, irrespective of caste, creed or colour," said Mahatma Gandhi in an exclusive interview with A. S. Bharatan, the Associated Press of India Special Correspondent.

Q.—"What would be the composition of the interim Government if you had your way?"

Mahatma Gandhi answered: "The interim Government would consist of top men, irrespective of caste, creed or colour."

Mahatma Gandhi added: "If I became the Viceroy of India I would startle the world with my list and yet make it acceptable."

Asked to explain what he meant by "top men", Mahatma Gandhi amplified his remark, by saying that he meant men and women who were the fittest to do the work that the country needed.

Mahatma Gandhi further stated that he

would not hesitate to leave out anyone at present in the Congress, if he felt that better men were available outside who would work in their respective spheres so as to bring full independence at the earliest time possible.

Q.—"In the course of your correspondence with the Viceroy on his proposals, you objected to the term 'Caste Hindus' in the matter of parity of representation for Hindus and Muslims adding that if this parity between Caste Hindus and Muslims was unalterable, then the Congress could have no place in the new Government."

"According to a report the Congress delegates to the Conference have accepted parity between Hindus other than Scheduled Castes, and Muslims. Have you any comment to make on this?"

Mahatma Gandhi replied: "If Congress men have accepted parity, it cannot be in the sense you imagine. I interpret the Viceregal pronouncement to mean—that neither community can ask for more representation than the other in the National Cabinet. Thus Hindus other than Scheduled Castes can, if they wish, be less but not more than Muslims."

**MAHATMA GANDHI AMONG JOURNALISTS.**



Q—“Do you approve the procedure suggested by Lord Wavell on Friday at the Leaders’ Conference for selection of the new Executive Council—that all Parties should submit separate panels of names to the Viceroy first; that thereafter he would consult Party Leaders before making his final selection; and place the personnel finally selected by him before the Conference for approval?”

Mahatma Gandhi replied. “The procedure suggested by Lord Wavell is, in my opinion, good in as much as the Viceroy does not seek to impose his will on the Conference.

“The Viceroy has said in his opening remarks to delegates that the various elements represented in the Conference should regard him (the Viceroy) as their leader.

“It is a good and dignified expression that Lord Wavell has used. He thus acts at the Conference as its leader and not as the agent of Whitchall.”

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Maulana Azad in an interview declared that the Congress approach to the Wavell plan was not dictated by party considerations, but that it was national. “The Congress approach is independent, without reference to what other parties would or would not do.”

In answer to a question the Congress President explained that by agreeing to participate in the Conference the Congress had shown its readiness to be constructive in its attitude rather than destructive.

The Congress could very well have demanded, he said, the release of all political prisoners still under detention and also the removal of the ban on the All India Congress Committee and other allied organisations before agreeing to participate in the Simla Conference. Nobody could have blamed the Congress if it had insisted on the fulfilment of those conditions as a pre-requisite for Congress participation.

This the Congress did not do even at the risk of being misunderstood by its own followers. This, added the Maulana, proved the readiness of the Congress to contribute its share to the success of the constructive move that had been made by Lord Wavell.

“The Congress could not have gone farther,” the Maulana said. “All reasonable men should agree that the Congress could not have gone farther than this.”

Explaining the Congress approach the Congress President said: “The Congress will always have before it the national



“CONGRESS APPROACH IS NATIONAL” AZAD

point of view and any step which the Congress takes will be in accordance with its traditions and policy. For instance, when the Congress prepares the panel, it will see to it that it nominates Hindus, Muslims, Harijans and other communities.

The Congress President further made it clear that the selection of the personnel for the panel would not be confined to Congressmen alone. “Our object is to have the best men in the country, irrespective of the fact whether they are Congressmen or not.”

In reply to a suggestion made in certain quarters that the Congress was big enough to afford to yield to the Muslim League without suffering in stature or prestige, the Maulana said: “I do not share that view. I feel that if the Congress fails to show sufficient strength and determination at a critical juncture like the present, the future of the Congress organisation will be jeopardised.”

Apart from these interviews the leaders had a restful day at Simla.

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On his way to Simla, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in an interview said: “We feel we must succeed at Simla. The Congress President and the Congress people are trying their best to find a solution, but that does not mean that the offer or whatever it is, takes us any distance. “We feel, however, that it may create a situation which might help in solving the problem and therefore, we must try to get it to succeed. I think Mr. Jinnah is certainly wrong in thinking that every Muslim sees the Executive Council should be captured by the Muslim League.”



July. I was essentially a Jawaharlal Day at Simla.

Above : Jawaharlal and Azad looking at the Crowds.

Right top : Jawaharlal addressing a Crowd.

Right below : Jawaharlal and Azad in Conference at "Armsdell"



## Sunday, July, 1.

This was essentially a Jawaharlal day in Simla. There was practically no political discussion except a two-hour meeting between Mahatma Gandhi on the one side and Maulana Azad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Acharya Kripalani on the other. This was more in the nature of exchanging notes and posting Pandit Nehru with all that had happened.

Pandit Nehru addressed a press conference within a few minutes of his arrival in Simla and made a speech to a large crowd.

Asked if he would feel happy to be included in the Viceroy's new Executive Council, the Pandit replied that the question of his happiness or otherwise did not arise. The real question was as to who would choose him;

that is to say, if he was chosen by the Congress Working Committee or the Congress President and was directed by them to go and work in the Viceroy's Executive Council, it would be a different thing from the position if he were chosen by the Viceroy to do so.

Pandit Nehru added; "If I am chosen by the Congress, I cannot at present say whether I will say yes or no. It will all depend on circumstances and my mood. I am a man of discipline and if the Congress decides to participate in the new Executive Council and I am chosen by the Congress, then the Viceroy's choice will be merely formal. I would, therefore, have to consider the question but as I said before my decision will depend on circumstances and my mood."



**Monday, July 2.**

Two statements, one by Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan, General Secretary of the All India Muslim League, and another by Professor Humayun Kabir, Secretary to the Congress President, were issued to the press. These statements contrast the points of view of the two Muslim Schools of thought—the Muslim League and Nationalist Muslims.

### **League View.**

**N**AWABZADA Liaqat Ali Khan, General Secretary of the All-India Muslim League, in an interview with the Associated Press declared that the demand of the Congress for a share in the Muslim quota of seats in the Executive Council is most unreasonable and has no justification whatsoever."

The Nawabzada was asked: "Now that both the Congress and the Muslim League have once again made their viewpoints clear, do you feel there is still a possibility of compromise on the question of nomination of Muslim members?"

He replied: "On the question of the nomination of Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council, the position of the Muslim League has been made abundantly clear by Mr. Jinnah in his Press conference, and it has been shown that the demand of the Congress for a share in the Muslim quota is most unreasonable and has no justification whatsoever."

"It would be illuminating to read Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's summing up of the position of the so called nationalist Muslims in his autobiography as far back as 1934. He (Nehru) writes: 'There came a time when they (nationalist Muslims) had nothing left to call their own, no fundamental principle on which they stood except one and that had been the very sheet-anchor of their group: joint electorates. But again the policy of the lesser evil presented the fatal choice to them, and they emerge from the ordeal minus that sheet-anchor."

### **"Pitiful Story"**

"So today they stand divested of every shred of principle or practice—on the basis of which they formed their group and which they proudly nailed to their masthead—of everything, all except their name. The collapse and elimination of the nationalist Muslims as a group—as individuals they are of course still important leaders of the Congress—forms a pitiful story. It took many years, and the last chapter has only been written this year (1934)."

After quoting the above passage Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan said: "This was the position of the so-called nationalist Muslims in 1934. Today in the year of grace 1945, they have absolutely no position and are completely wiped off except a few individuals who are in the Congress for reasons of their own."

Asked what the attitude of the Muslim League was likely to be in case the personnel of the Muslim block in the Executive Council was not confined by the Viceroy to the Muslim League nominees, Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan replied: "Mr. Jinnah has already given an indication on this point in his Press conference and I do not think there is any need for me to say anything further."

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### **Nationalists' View.**

**I**n his Press conference, Mr Jinnah referred to the strength of the Muslim League Party in various legislatures. A correct indication of strength can be obtained only in a general election," said Prof. Humayun Kabir, secretary to the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in a statement to the Press. "In the last general election, the League obtained only four per cent of the Muslim votes cast, and no party or organization can honestly claim members except those returned on its own ticket. Since then, there have been some by-elections but as is well known, by-elections are no test of public support. Even then the League has not always won. In the Punjab it lost to the Unionist Party in Dera Ghazi Khan and in Sind to Khan Bahadar Maula Baksh of the Azad Muslim Party."

"A district board election also offers some indication of public opinion. The electorate is almost the same as for the Assembly. In the district board elections of Noakhali in Bengal, the League could not win more than half the Muslim seats."

"The League lost heavily in Sialkot and Sheikhupura while it could not secure even one seat in Campbellpur. A more revealing instance is the last Calcutta Corporation elections. Out of the 11,000 Muslim votes cast, the League secured only a little over 6,000 while the votes cast against the League



were well over 4,000. This is the nearest approach we have had to a general election in the recent past, and it is well known that the League is much stronger in towns than in rural areas.

### No Majority

"So far as the position in the legislatures is concerned, the League has no majority in any of the Muslim majority provinces. We threw out the League Coalition Ministry in Bengal, in spite of the fact that it had the support of the European Party and its porteges. The League could never have gone into office in Bengal except for gubernatorial patronage and European backing. Only 39 members were originally returned to the Bengal Assembly on the League ticket and the genuine membership of the League Party there has never exceeded 43. This was the number in the Opposition when Mr Fazlul Haq formed his Progressive Coalition Ministry.

"Nor has the League ever had a majority of the Muslim members in the Punjab. It is the Unionist Party which claims a clear majority and is a standing refutation of all League claims.

"The position in the Frontier is still worse for the League. The League was never in a position to form a Ministry, except with the support of the Governor. The moment the Congress Party challenged its claim to office, it tumbled down with hardly any struggle.

"In Assam and Sind, party allegiances are fluid and uncertain. Even then the present Ministry in Assam can continue only so long as the Congress Party choses to keep it in office. If the Congress Party went into Opposition or even withdrew its support. Sir M. Saadullah would be forced to go out. In Sind also, it is the support or toleration of the Congress Party which is keeping Sir Ghulam Hussein in office. If the Congress had chosen to support Khan Bahadur Maula Baksh, it would have been he and not Sir Ghulam Hussein who would have represented Sind in the conference today.

"Of the four Muslim majority provinces, the Frontier is represented today in the conference by a member of the Congress and the Punjab by a member of the Unionist Party. Bengal alone is represented by a member of the League, but he has hardly the right to speak on behalf of the province after his decisive defeat in the legislature."

**Tuesday, July 3.**

"Manorville" was the hub of activity today. Here the Congress working Committee met. Mahatma Gandhi was present by special invitation. Maulana Azad made a report to his colleagues about the happenings at the Leader's Conference and explained to them the stage it had reached. The main task before the Committee was selection of personnel for the proposed Executive Council.

\* \* \*

The Associated Press of India reported that the Leader's Conference on Friday, June 29 unanimously agreed on the following five points :—

"(1) To effectively prosecute the war against Japan till victory is won;

"(2) To recommend for the new Executive Council men of ability and influence, and who are capable of taking decisions and assuming responsibility for carrying out such decisions;

"(3) To take steps, as soon as the new Executive Council has been established, to solve a long term, problem the future constitutional structure of India.

"(4) Till such time as the new constitution comes into force to work under the present constitution;

"(5) To accept the explanation given by Lord Wavell in his broadcast speech and by Mr. Leopold Amery (Secretary of State for India) in his speech in the House of Commons on the exercise of veto by the Viceroy.



MAULANA AZAD AND ACHARYA KRIPLANI

"The Leaders' conference voted on the five points and accepted them.

"All the Parties represented at the Leaders' Conference (except the Muslim League) agreed to submit panels of names for the new Executive Council to the Viceroy—at the latest by July 6.

"The Muslim League leader, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, however, while provisionally accepting the above points, made a reservation that he could submit a panel of names only after consultation with his Working Committee.

"The various Parties attending the Simla Conference are thus committed to the acceptance of the Wavell Plan to the extent mentioned above.

*"The only point on which agreement could not be reached was the one relating to the composition of the new Executive Council."*

### Final Selection

"As efforts outside the Leaders' Conference have not succeeded in producing an agreed proposal on this matter, the Viceroy has, under the terms of his broadcast, taken upon himself the responsibility for making the final selection from the panels of names submitted by various Parties.

"In making the final selection, the Viceroy will, in addition to consulting Party leaders, also ensure parity of representation between non-Scheduled Caste Hindus and Muslims and representation for other interests.

"After the final selection, the Viceroy will place the personnel before the Leader's Conference for its approval when it will be time for Parties represented at the Simla Conference to say whether they would accept it or not.

"The Muslim League has not yet made up its mind on this issue; but talks in Congress circles indicate (so far as the Congress is concerned) that there appears to be no difficulty in the acceptance of the Wavell Plan as an interim measure.

"The Working Committee of the Congress is now concerned with the selection of personnel which the Congress is to recommend to the Viceroy.

"While Mr. Gandhi in his letter to the Viceroy and in his interview to the Associated Press of India said that if he had his way he would select men irrespective of caste, creed, colour, or party, the Working Committee appears to be of the opinion that the

Congress should select top men in the Congress as far as possible."

\* \* \*

A meeting of Master Tara Singh's five advisers appointed by the Working Committee of the Shromani Akali Dal was held. It discussed the question of nominating a Sikh representative on the proposed Executive Council.

\* \* \*

Maulana Azad issued the following message to the Indian people :

### Azad's Message To Indians

SIMLA, July 3.—In the course of an exclusive interview with Khawaja Ahmed Abbas, special representative of the "Bombay Chronicle", Maulana Azad, Congress President has issued the following two messages, one to the people of India and the other to Indian Muslims.

To the Indian people :—"This is a critical moment in our political life and, therefore, it is essential that we should keep before us the real significance of the temporary situation that has arisen in the country. We should neither attach exaggerated and undue importance to the Wavell offer nor should we ignore the real demands and exigencies of the situation. Consistent with the defence of our principles if the way is opened to a temporary solution leading to our ultimate goal of freedom then we should unhesitatingly avail ourselves of it. If such a way is not opened then we should watch our step and not budge an inch from our position."

To the Indian Muslims :—"The Muslims of India should not think for a moment that the Muslims in the Congress are blind to the genuine doubts and grievances of the Muslims. Indeed, perhaps they realize this situation better than anyone else. The point, however, is, what should be the correct approach to remove these doubts and grievances? The difference between the nationalist Muslims and the Muslim League is not of the ultimate aim which after all is the wellbeing and honourable existence of the Indian Muslims in a free India but of methods to be used to achieve the desired end. And if we so desire we can easily remove even this difference over our respective methods. What is needed is broad vision, large-heartedness and sincerity of purpose."

Wednesday, July 4.

The Congress Working Committee met at "Armsdell" at 9 A. M. Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, President of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind, was present by special invitation.

At 2 P. M. the Working Committee met again at "Manorville". A complete picture of the Wavell plan, elucidated and explained by Lord Wavell in his personal discussion with the Congress President and Mahatma Gandhi on the eve of the Leaders' Conference, was presented to the Committee by Maulana Azad.

It will be recalled that when the Working Committee met in Bombay, it had issued an 'Instrument of Instructions' to the Congress President to obtain certain clarifications and elucidations from Lord Wavell by seeking an interview with him prior to a meeting of the Leaders' Conference.

"The Working Committee had authorised the Congress President to participate in the Leaders' Conference provided he was satisfied after his interview with the Viceroy that points of doubt in the minds of members of the Working Committee had been clarified.

"These points related to—

"(1) The question of exercise of veto power by the Viceroy.

"(2) The question of war expenditure—which would mainly be under the control of the War Member (the Commander-in-Chief), though the Finance Member would be the person entrusted with the responsibility of finding the necessary funds.

"(3) Whether the Wavell Plan provided sufficient scope for the interim Government to take the initiative in framing the new constitution envisaged under the Cripps proposals; and thereby solve the long term problem of the future constitutional structure of India.

"Congress doubts in regard to the use of veto power by the Viceroy were removed during the Azad—Wavell interview.

"Similarly, on the question of war expenditure the Viceroy indicated to the Congress President that though the War Minister would submit his budget for war expenses, it would be open to the Finance Member to examine the budget carefully and to say to what extent it would be reduced and to what extent he could meet it.

MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE AT SIMLA



## SATISFIED

"As regards the third point—future constitutional structure of India—the Congress President having thus obtained satisfactory elucidation of doubts issued a directive to Congress invitees to participate in the Leaders' Conference.

"At the Conference itself, all these three issues were raised; and from the trend of discussions at the Conference and the explanations given by Lord Wavell, Congress delegates felt satisfied on these points.

be that once it accepts the Wavell Plan and the new Government has been formed, it can hasten steps necessary to call a Constituent Assembly to frame a new constitution.

"The Working Committee was on Wednesday provided with this picture by the Congress President in detail.

"In order to supplement the Congress President's report and further to strengthen his stands in respect of commitments he had already made at the Leaders' Conference on behalf of the Congress, Mr. Gandhi addressed the Working Committee:



PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AND DR. KHAN SAHIB ON THE WAY TO THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

"Lobby talks indicate that the Congress feels that, though the Wavell Plan in respect of its political contents does not transfer enough power, it contains provisions which will enable the new Government to call a constituent Assembly as soon as possible to frame a new constitution for India—as envisaged in the Cripps Offer.

"Therefore, the interim nature of the proposed Government, it is stated, does not worry the Congress. The Congress view appears to

## DOUBTS CLEARED.

"Manny points of doubt were raised by several members and both Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Mr. Gandhi cleared these doubts.

"When the Working Committee has resumed on Thursday morning, it will initiate discussion on the personnel to be selected by the Congress. On Thursday afternoon, Mr. Gandhi will continue his address.

"The Congress High Command hopes to complete a list of names by Friday," concludes the political correspondent of the Associated Press of India.

"Whether the Congress should submit a small panel of names and insist upon the Viceroy accepting all the names recommended, or whether it should submit a sufficiently large list of representatives of all communities and interests, and leave discretion to the Viceroy to select from such a list was the subject debated for two hours on Wednesday by the Congress Working Committee," continues the Associated Press of India political correspondent.

"More than one member, it is gathered, emphasised during Wednesday morning's discussions that if the Congress submitted a limited number of names and insisted on Lord Wavell's accepting all the names a deadlock might arise.

The Congress would be acting in precisely the same way as the Muslim League though Congress leaders had proclaimed their intention to accept the Wavell Plan provided certain points were clarified and doubts were removed.

Sponsors of this viewpoint held that the purpose of the Simla Conference was to end the present political deadlock, and there was no point in adopting a course which in trying to solve the main deadlock would create a new deadlock—defeating the purpose of the Conference.

"Supporters of this stand are reported to have argued that opinion so far expressed by top-rank Congress leaders had clearly indicated that the Congress was in favour of acceptance of the Wavell plan provided it afforded sufficient scope for Congress efforts towards attainment of national independence.

"The Leaders Conference had come to the conclusion that the Wavell Plan afforded such opportunities. That being the case, there was no point in adopting a course which would create new difficulties.

"Furthermore, both Mr. Gandhi and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had been convinced of the sincerity of purpose of Lord Wavell. Therefore, it would be quite appropriate for the Congress to submit a panel of names and leave the matter in the hands of the Viceroy, who would make the final selection.

"The task facing the Congress Working Committee in the words of a prominent Congress leader, if a stupendous one,—for never was the Congress (except perhaps during the Cripps negotiations in 1942) called upon to give up—at any rate temporarily—its revolutionary policy and to assume responsibilities of government both at the Centre and in the provinces, writes the Associated Press of India political correspondent in a third dispatch.

"The Congress Working Committee is therefore concentrating its attention on the following questions.

"1. What is to happen to the Congress organisation?

"2. Who are the fittest persons to be put in positions of power and responsibility at the Centre and in the provinces?

"3. How to produce a Government, as envisaged in the Wavell Plan in co-operation with other elements in the country, capable of taking effective steps to create machinery for framing a new constitution?

"4. How could team work be secured.

"5. How to ensure co-ordination between the Centre and provinces so as to avoid repetition of events like the Bengal famine?

"6. How could all the resources of Governments—those of the Centre and of the Provinces—be directed towards pulling the country out of present abnormal conditions?

"Such are questions that have been engaging the attention of the Working Committee since it began discussions in Simla on Tuesday. In the words of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Working Committee is discussing the Wavell Plan and all questions arising therefrom."

**Thursday, July 5.**

The Congress Working Committee held two sittings, one at "Armsdell" and another at "Manorville". At the invitation of Maulana Azad all Congress invitees to the Leaders' Conference attended the second session of the Working Committee. What transpired there remains a secret.

The Congress President received the following telegram from Mr. Fazlul Haq, leader of the Opposition in the Bengal Assembly: "Muslim members in Opposition in the Bengal Assembly in a meeting assembled earnestly prayed that the Congress should take the

fullest advantage of the Wavell plan as a definite step towards the freedom of India. They have confidence in your leadership that the Congress would do nothing to hamper the Viceroy in his noble work. They also pray that the Congress will not give up its life-long idealism in order to placate the irreconcilables and do nothing which will embarrass the Viceroy or even make him hesitate to go forward with his plan. The Viceroy should be assured that he can safely ignore threats coming from any quarter."

**Friday, July 6.**

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League met at the Cecil Hotel. Mr. Jinnah explained to the members the implications of the Wavell plan in the light of his conversations with the Viceroy, and Pandit Pant. He also placed before the Working Committee his correspondence with the Viceroy including Lord Wavell's letter asking the Muslim League President to submit a panel of names for inclusion in the new Executive Council.

\* \* \*

The Congress Working Committee met again and gave finishing touches to its list of nominees for the Executive Council. The list, from all accounts, included such front rank leaders as Pandit Nehru, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, a nationalist Muslim, one or two scheduled castes men and one representative each of the Indian Christian and Parsi communities.

In the discussions which preceded the selection Mahatma Gandhi proposed that in regard to the composition of the Executive Council the Congress should make a non-communal and nationalistic approach. This view was not accepted by the Working Committee.

The opposition was based on the view that however estimable in theory, the Mahatma's approach would be acceptable neither to the Viceroy nor to the Muslim League.

Mahatma Gandhi in his address to the Congress Working Committee had explained that, not only to sustain the Congress professions but also to lay the foundations of true and lasting independence without the canker of communalism, it was essential that the Congress nominees should be chosen without reference to majority, minority or parity but solely with an eye to ability and character.

Many members of the Working Committee, while agreeing with the ideology of the Mahatma's approach, questioned its practical wisdom. According to them it was unreal to plan the composition with the Hindus in a minority, a larger representation to the Muslims and a still larger quota for the smaller minority; for the basis of the Wavell Plan was parity between Hindus and Muslims and it was unlikely that the Viceroy would accept such a proposal. Nor was it open to the Congress to go back on its agreement to parity signified earlier when the Viceroy sought the views of the Conference on the main features of His Majesty's offer.

The Mahatma's critics pleaded with him that from a purely practical point of view, the Congress would be hard put to it to justify itself if, by adopting his suggestion, it further curtailed the Hindu representation. The majority community had already been reduced to a level of equality with the Muslims and it would be manifestly unjust to give them less representation than what was accorded to the Muslims. Maulana Azad himself led the opposition on these lines.

The Mahatma's opponents won the day and his idealistic proposal was superseded by a formula which retained the parity idea and sought to sustain the Congress claim to solicitude for all the minorities.

\* \* \*

Master Tara Singh, the Sikh leader, left Cecil Hotel at 12-30 p.m. to see the Viceroy. He returned from the Viceregal Lodge at 1 p.m. after submitting a panel of three names on behalf of the Sikhs.

**Saturday, July 7.**

Maulana Azad dispatched a letter to the Viceroy containing the Congress panel of names. The following names were reported to have been included :

- (1) Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.
- (2) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.
- (3) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- (4) Dr. Rajendra Prasad.
- (5) Mr. Asaf Ali.
- (6) Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee.
- (7) Another non-Congress Hindu.
- (8) Mr. M. A. Jinnah.
- (9) Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan.
- (10) Nawab Mohammed Ismail Khan.

- (11) Master Tara Singh.
- (12) Sir Ardeshir Dalal.
- (13) Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.
- (14) Mr. Munuswami (Scheduled Castes) from Madras.
- (15) Another from Bengal to represent Scheduled castes.

Before sending the list to the Viceroy the Congress Working Committee thought it fit to announce its contents to all the Congress invitees to the Viceregal Conference. Accordingly, the Congress ex-Premiers and the leaders of the Congress parties in the two Houses of the Central Legislature were invited to attend the Working Committee on Saturday morning.

### Invitees' Criticism

A heated discussion took place, in which the omission of one or two leaders—Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, to be precise—whose inclusion was regarded as probable or advisable was



DR. KHAN SAHIB, PREMIER N. W. F. PROVINCE,<sup>71</sup>  
IN SIMLA

adversely commented upon by some of the invitees, but the Committee remained unmoved. Another point made by the critics was, however, accepted.

It was primarily directed against the inclusion of Sir Chintaman Deshmukh. Let me say at once that no one had anything personal against Sir Chintaman; on the contrary, everyone readily acknowledged his undoubted ability. The factor which went against him in the eyes of the critics was that he was a member of the Indian Civil Service.

The dissentients contended that Sir Chintaman Deshmukh and Sir Ardeshir Dalal, together with the Commander-in-Chief, constituted more or less a block of three officials. The present Government of India Act lays down that there must be at least three Executive Councillors who have served the Crown for a period of ten years.

The Wavell Plan contemplates an amendment of this provision of the Act so as to facilitate the complete non-officialisation of the Executive Council, barring the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. Why then, it was argued, surrender what was conceded in the Wavell Plan? Why should the Congress choose officials when it was free to select public men? Nothing appears to have been said against Sir Ardeshir, who comes under the category of a Parsi; nothing could be said against the Commander-in-Chief, who is outside the range of Congress choice. Criticism, therefore, narrowed down to Sir Chintaman, and it was urged that a non-official Hindu should replace him. The point went home.

Another factor which went against Sir Chintaman was, curiously enough his own merit.

The inclusion of the Governor of the Reserve Bank meant that he was the obvious man for the Finance portfolio. Some leaders argued that the Congress should not appear to wish to monopolise the principal branches of the administration.

The result was that Sir Chintaman's name was replaced by that of a Hindu publicist of Bombay whose identity could not be ascertained. Otherwise the list given above has gone to the Viceroy unchanged. A covering letter has also been sent to His Excellency.

Drafted by Mr. Gandhi, this letter explains why the Congress is accepting office at the Centre and sets out the qualifications of each of the persons recommended by the Congress. It is stated that the Congress regards this as "the first step towards the attainment of Indian independence" and that it will not be interested in the proposition were it otherwise.

This is in reiteration of what the Maulana has already told the Viceroy in person and at the conference.

The letter proceeds to point out that this is the criterion which has governed the choice





MUSLIM LEAGUE WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING AT SIMLA

of Congress nominees. While every attempt has been made to pick out the best men with an eye to adequate representation for the minorities, the choice has certainly been influenced by the goal ahead. In other words, the persons selected are, in the opinion of the Congress, such as will strive to bring about at an early date the evolution of a constitution for free India.

#### Co-operation in Goal.

It is gathered that the letter is firm on this point. From the point of view of pure ability in the sense of competence or cleverness there may be better men, for instance, in the Scheduled Classes, but men of mere ability are not acceptable to the Congress unless they are certain to co-operate with the Congress in the early attainment of its goal. The Congress will make a stand on this as well as on the inclusion of Nationalist Muslims.

Reverting to the list, it is noteworthy that the Congress president's name is in it. This is a radical change in Congress policy and remarked a leader, strikingly demonstrates its determination to make a success of the Wavell Plan.

Another feature is the presence of a woman who in her person combines the representation of two interests, namely, the Indian Christian minority and the fair sex.

It should also be noticed that the list includes the President of the Mahasabha, which is not represented at the Viceroy's Conference.

Analysed partywise, there are eight Congressmen (three Hindus, two Muslims, two Scheduled Class men and one Indian Christian) as against three Leaguers in a council of 17, including the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. View commuually, there are five Hindus, five Muslims and five other minorities

\* \* \*

And now for the activities of the Muslims League. The League Working Committee, which met on Friday had a general discussion on the origin and progress of the Wavell Plan and its implications for Muslims. It unanimously decided on Saturday morning to seek clarification from the Viceroy on three points; firstly, whether the League would have the exclusive right to nominate the Muslim Councillors; secondly



whether all its nominees would be accepted by His Excellency; and thirdly, what would be the quota of the other minorities. The League Committee adjourned till Sunday morning, evidently hoping to receive Lord Wavell's reply before then.

It may be noted that Mr. Jinnah put these very questions to the Viceroy at the Leaders' Conference, but His Excellency declined to answer them. Why were the questions repeated? Perhaps the presentation of the questions for a second time was intended to show to the Viceroy that the entire Working Committee of the League was behind Mr. Jinnah's demand for a guarantee in terms of the implications of the questions. League circles affirmed that the formulation of the questions with the authority of the League Executive presaged firm attitude and almost certain rejection of the Wavell Plan unless the League's claim was met.

By the day's end all other parties excepting the Muslim League had submitted their panels to the Viceroy.

#### Sunday, July 8.

Mr. Jinnah met the Viceroy. The interview which lasted 90 minutes was in response

to a letter received from His Excellency by Mr. Jinnah to-day. Mr. Jinnah reiterated during his interview with Lord Wavell the exclusive right of the League to nominate Muslim Councillors and demanded an assurance that the Viceroy would exercise his veto in the event of the Council by a majority reaching decisions detrimental to the interests of Muslims or prejudicial to the League goal of Pakistan. He elicited information regarding the quantum of representation proposed to be given to other minorities vis-a-vis the League quota and the allocation of portfolios.

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Maulana Azad also received a letter from the Viceroy, the content of which was not reported.

#### Monday, July 9.

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League adjourned after reaching a decision and authorising its President to communicate it to the Viceroy. The decision conveyed to the Viceroy was, that the League would not submit its nominations for the proposed Executive Council. This followed the receipt of a letter from the Viceroy to Mr. Jinnah.

MR. JINNAH AT A RECEPTION IN SIMLA



The League's refusal to co-operate was clarified by Mr. Jinnah at a reception given in his honour by the Simla District Muslim League.

On the Wavell proposals, Mr. Jinnah said: "We are now at present at a stage of confidential talks and negotiations. I believe it would not be conducive to the best results which we all desire that in the midst of these confidential talks and negotiations I should discuss publicly the question. Perhaps you are impatient, but have patience, because it is a virtue and in the long run it pays."

"I think I am not disclosing any secrets to which I am pledged and to which I strictly adhere. On June 29 I made a statement at a press conference giving you a picture of some of the issues that we had to tackle. The complete and full picture has not yet emerged. We are in this conference, more or less, in the position of advisers to Lord Wavell, who has been good enough to call us. In order that that advice may be well-considered—because two heads are better than one—we have requisitioned the services of the members of our Muslim League Working Committee. But do not forget we are only advisers. When the true picture emerges it cannot be binding upon the All-India Muslim League until it has been ratified by our organisation. Do not, therefore, have any apprehension."

Mr. Jinnah expressed gratification at the trust placed in him and said: "Nothing on this earth will make me accept any proposal which I think is detrimental to the Muslim interest. Nothing will make me accept any proposal or scheme which I think is likely to prejudice, or militate against our goal of Pakistan. After all it has been made clear that this is only a makeshift and stopgap arrangement. We are not laying down the future constitution."

"The whole question is with all the desire to take up responsibility, we cannot enter into an arrangement which is not an honourable one, just to us and reasonable."

Mr. Jinnah said that the pressure of overwork had told upon his health and he needed rest for sometime. He had lost his reserve but with some rest and their good wishes he would again be fit to serve them till his death. There was no doubt, except perhaps for those who were blind to realise, that today the All-India Muslim League was the only authoritative and representative organisation of the

Muslims of India. This truth had been demonstrated. But on occasions like the present one—and there were many such occasions in the past—their own Muslim brethren were found playing in the hands of their enemies. "They remain thoroughly exposed and today they are not more than the handful of Muslims who play into the hands of our opponents," he said.

Mr. Jinnah maintained that the entire Muslim community was behind the Muslim League and said: "Even our worst opponents and enemies today recognise that if there is any organisation in the country which is well-equipped and has the solid support of the Muslims, it is the All-India Muslim League. They may abuse us but they know in their heart of heart that what I predicted eight years ago is correct and that is in this sub-continent there are three powers. One is the best organised and most powerful party the British, who are actually ruling this country and the other is the Congress. In spite of all their pretences and manoeuvres which will not stand the test, the Congress is a Hindu body. We have proved it. There are lakhs and lakhs of Muslims behind us and we are all organised."

"But there is still a great deal of work to be done. We have reached the first stage of our journey. We Muslims were a crowd before but today there is no doubt whatever that we are a nation under one flag, one platform and with a definite goal of Pakistan."

"What does Pakistan mean. It means that in this sub-continent where we are in majority, we are determined to establish our national State. I feel confident that as we go on we will be able to show the world that in spite of the opposition we shall establish Pakistan."

Mr. Jinnah said that he had received thousands of telegrams and letters from all parts of India expressing loyal sentiments to the League. He knew fully well what the views of Muslims were, what they wanted and he assured them that he would not yield anything which would in any way infringe upon the rights of Muslims.

**Tuesday, July 13.**

After a fortnight of intensive political activity, Simla witnessed a quiet day. The leaders were in a holiday mood. It was a sunny day. In the evening, most of the leaders went out to view the glorious sunset beyond the mountain peaks.

The belief prevailed that the Viceroy was in communication with Whitehall.

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Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, in an exclusive interview with Mr. Stewart Densley, United Press of America correspondent at Simla said that the basic reason why the League is not able to collaborate with the Congress in the preparation of a joint panel for submission to the Viceroy was because the Congress insisted that they should do the choosing or that we should agree that two Muslims out of the Muslim block should be chosen by them.

"Thus the Congress by a flank movement, attempts to nullify the very basic principles underlying the proposal—which they accepted—and reduce the Muslim effectiveness by securing Congress and Muslim 'quislings.'"

Mr. Jinnah also disclosed that so far as the League is concerned any arrangement in the Centre will have to be achieved with "simultaneous agreement" or arrangements in provinces, if a workable administration is to be devised.

Returning to the question of panel selection, Mr. Jinnah said: "Under the Wavell proposals quota is allotted to Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Scheduled Castes and may be to some other communities on communal basis and our contention is—and it is based on principles of the proposals—that the Muslim quota should be recommended by the Muslim League since it has an authoritative representation of Muslims."

As regards provincial arrangements Mr. Jinnah asserted that "no arrangements at the Centre would work satisfactorily unless the provincial arrangements are made which will satisfy the two major parties—The Hindus and the Muslims—if section 93 is to be removed."

Mr. Jinnah re-emphasized the League's basic stand that no permanent Indian solution can be achieved without recognition of Pakistan, and described as "camouflage" the Congress members' statements that agreement on Wavell Plan might lead to rapid creation of an All-India National Government.

Mr. Jinnah said: "We can never agree to any kind of united India national government because it would be a Hindu national government with overwhelming communal—not political—majority."

Commenting on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's statement to the United Press of America that the solution for India's economic ills in the

establishment of progressive socialism" under the national government, Mr. Jinnah said that such remarks were beside the point since they predicted the mistaken assumption that there could be a united India. As for the progressive government "when our Pakistan is eventually established on the basis of divided India, it will not lag behind any civilized government in the world" in promoting social-economic, educational and political reforms and bettering the lot of the poor." Mr. Jinnah said. He declined to enumerate concrete steps or outlines for any definite programme at present, but asserted that Pakistan would be the people's government, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or race.

Wednesday, July 11.

It was a day of excitement, suspense and anxiety in Simla. The day dawned bright and cheerful; everyone believed that the unexpected summoning of the League Working Committee today was a hopeful sign. By noon, however, the hope evaporated and gave place to depression. Mr. Jinnah met the Viceroy for the last time. The meeting which lasted 15 minutes was to decide the fate of the Conference. Mr. Jinnah refused to accept the Viceroy's tentative list of Muslim Councilors prepared by His Excellency. This meant the League staying out.

Mr. Jinnah had armed himself with authority from his Working Committee to act on any suggestion which the Viceroy might make. It was for this purpose that the League Working Committee met in the morning, and considered the following propositions:

The Committee could consider only hypothetical propositions. (1) Mr. Jinnah was authorised to accept and act upon any verbal assurances which the Viceroy might give in respect both of Pakistan and of the interim Government; (2) it was decided that the League should keep out of provincial Governments in Congress Provinces if it should be proposed to abrogate Section 93 leaving the question of the Centre in abeyance; (3) the Committee resolved to take disciplinary action against any member of the League who might be invited by the Viceroy to join the Centre and who might respond, unless the League demands were fully met; and (4) it was agreed that the League could forthwith start an election campaign. There was no question of the League changing its attitude to the Wavell Plan.

Thus prepared for conceivable suggestions, Mr. Jinnah left his hotel a few minutes before 3 p. m. and rode down to Viceregal Lodge in his rikshaw which was surmounted by the League's green flag and drawn by four liveried men. He did not stay long: the interview lasted but 15 minutes. Most observers concluded from the brevity of the interview that Mr. Jinnah had finally refused to play ball. Later in the evening the League Committee met again and endorsed what Mr. Jinnah had done.

According to League circles the Viceroy asked whether there was any change in the League attitude and Mr. Jinnah answered in the negative. Thereupon, His Excellency produced a tentative list of names drawn up by him and asked whether that was acceptable to the League.

The Viceroys' list comprised four League Muslims and a fifth non-League (presumed to be Unionist) Muslim.

Mr. Jinnah's reaction was firm and immediate. He answered that he could not agree to any suggestion which contemplated the inclusion of a Muslim other than those nominated by the League.

The Viceroy is reported to have told Mr. Jinnah that he could not recognise the League's claim for the following reasons. There are many Muslims outside the League who are entitled to be represented in their own right such as the Unionist Muslims of the Punjab; secondly, the parity contemplated in the plan is between Hindus and Muslims and not League Muslims and, thirdly, His Excellency could not accept the League's representation without question and without the right to make the final choice.

\* \* \*

Mahatma Gandhi drove into the gates of the Viceregal Lodge at 4.30 p. m. in a car provided by the Viceroy. Exactly an hour later he returned by another route presumably to avoid the crowd at the main entrance. The Viceroy was reported to have acquainted the Mahatma with the break with the League and invited him to make suggestions, if any. The Mahatma offered his personal advice and suggested to His Excellency to call the Congress President for consultation.

\* \* \*

"The Congress is prepared to participate in a new interim Government under the terms of the Wavell Plan to which it already has agreed

even though the Muslim League decides against entering such Government, but the Congress will ask that the 'door be left open' to the League," Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stated in an interview today.

"Of course, this matter is not entirely in our hands, because there are other parties involved one of which is the British Government but we hope that if the League decides not to come in that decision will be only a temporary one and it will change its mind and come in later." Pandit Nehru said.

Replying to a question concerning Congress plans in the event of the current Simla Conference plan collapsing without a new Government being established, he declared that he was not only unable to answer such questions because such a possibility had not been considered but also that he was of the opinion that it should not be considered.

"One should not enter such negotiations as these and work for their success and all the while plan of what to do when they fail," he explained.

He reiterated that the Congress Party wanted the Muslim League to participate in the proposed new Government because it felt it must co-operate with all elements in the country in the present circumstances and that all must work together for the good of India.

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**M**R. C. Rajagopalachari in an interview today replied to Mr. Jinnah's two points firstly, with reference to Pakistan and secondly, with reference to the Muslim Leagues claim to be the sole representative of Muslim political opinion.

He said: "There are two important issues raised by Mr. Jinnah. One is the Pakistan issue and the other the Muslim League's claim exclusively to represent all the Muslims in India. Both these issues are definitely to be left undecided and unprejudiced in making an interim settlement and forming an Executive Council to function until the war is over.

"The Pakistan issue will be taken up for decision when the new constitution is considered. The League's claim to represent all Muslims can only be decided in favour of the League when and if it substantiates its claim at the coming elections. One can understand the League's demand for acceptance, before the elections, of its claim to be the sole

representative of Muslims if its present strength in the legislatures warranted such a claim. As it stands, the claim is backed only by suppositions. It is therefore, not surprising that the British plan proceeds on the basis of party on the two undecided issues. The Leaguers cannot claim completely to exclude non-League Muslims on any reasonable ground. These are the reasons why one cannot accept Mr. Jinnah's arguments in his American press interview.

"The Wavell Plan is clear as regards the restoration of popular Governments in the provinces. There is no compulsion, but it is recommended that provincial ministries should have representatives of minority groups in the legislatures instead of being one party Governments. The Congress is not likely to raise any objection to this principle for the interim period when the matter comes up for consideration, if the League shows a spirit of accommodation in the disposal of the question of the Centre.

"It is now no secret that the Congress has asked its best men to take up the responsibility of working the Wavell Plan. There is no room left for any suspicion or mental reservations. There is no section in the conference now that desires to keep away from the plan, barring the Muslim League who have yet to decide their course. If the League intransigence should once again prove to be a block, it would be hard for it to justify its attitude before the world. The British Government have initiated the present conference with the express determination of not being baffled by a mere want of agreement on reasonable proposals. It is open to Mr. Jinnah now to pay a great part, positive and constructive, in the interests of India as a whole without losing or prejudicing the slightest item in his budget of claims. There can be no better opportunity and no better atmosphere than are available at present for a really satisfactory all round interim settlement.

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Mr. Rajagopalachari in an address to the South India Club today in Tamil counselled his audience patience for the result of the Simla Conference. It was mainly a women's meeting.

Referring to the Muslim League's attitude, Mr. Rajagopalachari said: "The League's unreasonable claim for exclusive control over all Muslim nominations stands in the way in spite of the Congress acceptance of the

Wavell Plan. But we have to put aside depression on the strength of two solid reasons.

"One is that the British plan was initiated with the full knowledge of the intransigent attitude of the Muslim League, and Lord Wavell from the outset had refused to give any assurance to the League leader that nothing would be done unless he gave his consent. We have, therefore, reasons to hope for the plan to go through in spite of the League's attitude.

"The other ground is that for the first time in Congress history, Congress leaders have thrown their whole weight into the plan and the British Government has every reason to put the Government of India on a firm and popular basis and end the present strain on Indo-British feeling."

As soon as the Wavell Plan was announced on June 14, Mr. Rajagopalachari said, he at once wrote to Mr. Gandhi that if men like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Babu Rajendra Prasad took up responsibility "brass would become gold and in spite of all the defects of the composite Government set up the alchemy of Congress top leaders would bring a complete change in the face of things." He was glad that what he wished had been done and that the Congress had put forward its first class leaders to undertake responsibility.

Mr. Rajagopalachari declared amidst cheers that if provinces like the Punjab and Bengal could not settle the Hindu-Muslim tangle, the rest of India could not wait for all time and people in the south should give notice to their brethren of the north that before a particular date the latter's communal dispute should be ended, otherwise the south would have to look after her own affairs and work for her way to Swaraj.

#### Thursday, July 12.

The Congress President, accompanied by his interpreter Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, met the Viceroy for an hour and thereafter addressed his Working Committee and gave them an account of his talk with Lord Wavell. The Viceroy informed Maulana Azad that the Muslim League President had rejected his offer of our seats for the Muslim League in the new Executive Council.

In the Congress camp, failure of the Simla Conference was taken as a foregone conclusion.

In the forenoon Malik Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, Premier of the Punjab, spent an hour with the Viceroy.

### Friday, July 13.

By now, it had become widely known that the Conference had failed. The leaders were already preparing to leave Simla.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Khan Sahib,

the Frontier Premier, met the Viceroy. They discussed provincial matters with Lord Wavell.

The Congress Working Committee held a four and a half hours' session, considered the entire situation arising out of the Wavell Plan and authorised the President to represent the Congress point of view at the Conference on Saturday.

Pl. St.

## THE FATEFUL JULY 14

The Simla Conference ended today. Its failure was announced to the leaders by the Viceroy. Lord Wavell took upon himself the responsibility for the failure and appealed to the leaders to avoid recriminations. He said ;

“I MUST give the conference an account of what has happened since we adjourned on 29th June.

“As you know, my original intention was that the conference should agree upon the strength and composition of the Executive Council; and that thereafter the parties should send me lists of names. To these lists I would, if necessary, have added names of my own, and attempted to form on paper an Executive Council which might be acceptable to His Majesty's Government, myself, and the conference. I intended to discuss my selections with the leaders, and finally to put them to the conference.

“Unfortunately, the conference was unable to agree about the strength and composition of the Executive Council, and on the 29th June I undertook, with the approval of the conference, to endeavour to produce a solution not based on any formula agreed in advance. I asked the parties to let me have lists of names and said I would do what I could to produce a solution acceptable to the leaders and to the conference.

“I received lists from all parties represented here except from the European Group, who decided not to send a list, and the Muslim League. I was, however, determined that the conference should not fail until I had made every possible effort to bring it to a successful ending. I, therefore, made my provisional selections, including certain Muslim League names, and I have every reason to believe that if these selections had been acceptable here, they would have been acceptable to His Majesty's Government,

### Scope of Selections.

“My selections would, I think, have given a balanced and efficient Executive Council, whose composition would have been reasonably fair to all parties. I do not find it possible, however, to accept the claims of any party in full. When I explained my solution to Mr. Jinnah he told me that it was not acceptable to the Muslim League and he was so decided that I felt it would be useless to continue the discussion. In the circumstances, I did not show my selections as a whole to Mr. Jinnah, and there was no object in showing them to the other leaders. The conference has, therefore, failed.

“Nobody can regret this more than I do myself. I wish to make it clear that the responsibility for the failure is mine. The main idea underlying the conference was mine. If it had succeeded its success could have been attributed to me, and I cannot place the blame for its failure upon any of the parties.

“I ask the party leaders to accept this view and to do all they can to ensure that there are no recriminations. It is of the utmost importance that this effort to secure agreement between the parties and communities should not result in a worsening of communal feeling.

“I ask you all to exercise the greatest possible restraint.

### The Next Steps.

“I have now to consider the next steps. I must remind you that whatever happens, the first two of three tasks mentioned in my broadcast—the prosecution of the war against Japan and the carrying on of the administration and preparation of post-war development—must be performed by the Government of India for the time being in office. It will be my duty to see that these tasks are performed with the greatest energy that I can impose, and I cannot

permit any hindrance to them.

"I propose to take a little time to consider in what way I can best help India after the failure of the conference. You can help best by refraining from recrimination. The war against Japan must be carried on and law and order must be maintained; and until I see my way more clearly than I do now, it may be difficult perhaps impossible to suggest any new move. No Government can carry on under the daily prospect of change or dissolution. I have to secure the stability and day-to-day efficiency of my Government, and it would be impossible to enter upon continuous or even frequent political discussions of the kind. Whatever decision His Majesty's Government may take in the near future must, therefore, in all probability hold good for some little time.

"I thank you all for the help you have given me and for the restrained patience and under-

standing you have shown. Do not, any of you, be discouraged by this setback. We shall overcome our difficulties in the end. The future greatness of India is not in doubt"

### India Office Statement.

The India Office issued the following statement: "His Majesty's Government greatly regrets to announce that the conference of leading politicians convened at Simla by the Viceroy of India with a view to the reconstruction of his Executive Council has failed to reach the requisite measure of agreement. These proposals were contained in the White Paper of June 14, and were announced in Parliament on that day.

"The Viceroy, who has most patiently and assiduously endeavoured to bring the parties together, has, therefore, terminated the sittings of the conference."

## WHO IS TO BLAME?

**F**OLLOWING the announcement of the failure of the Conference there was a spate of statements by party leaders, the most important being those of Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru on behalf of the Congress and that of Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the sole spokesman of the Muslim League.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, at a press conference gave a detailed review of the Congress stand vis-a-vis the Wavell plan. The manner in which the conference had been concluded was now before the world and world opinion could easily judge at whose door the responsibility for the failure should be laid, he said.

So far as the Congress was concerned, they had repeatedly made it clear that the Congress was prepared to take up the responsibility of administration. If the British Government were really serious to settle the issue, they should have foreseen and realised the communal and other difficulties and should have been prepared to meet them. They should not have given the right of veto to any particular group to hold up the progress of the country. "Those who are prepared to go forward," he said, "should be allowed to go forward, and those who wish to keep out should be left out."

Maulana Azad prefaced his remarks by expressing his firm hope in an ultimate settle-

ment. He said he gave expression not only to his personal opinion, but also to that of the Congress.

### Congress Attitude

The Congress President explained the reasons for the Congress participation in the conference. "The proposals were presented to us suddenly," he said. "On June 15 I and my colleagues were released and we had to take a decision straightway on the plan. You can realise our difficulties. We were thrown into a new world, and despite the difficulties, the Working Committee decided to participate in the conference. We realised that vast changes had taken place in the international sphere and those changes had undoubtedly repercussions on the Indian problem. The inevitable result of those changes has been to bring to the forefront the question of Indian freedom and that of freedom of the Asiatic countries.

"We are very near our goal, and the next stage is the goal itself. It does not matter at all what are the intentions of the British Government."

The Maulana added: while fully bearing in mind the fact that the present arrangement is purely temporary and interim, and should not possibly be regarded as a precedent for the permanent arrangement of the future, I should like to emphasise and make



it perfectly clear that the Congress is essentially a national organisation and it cannot possibly be a party to any arrangement, howsoever interim and temporary it may be that prejudices its national character, tends to impair the growth of nationalism or reduces it directly or indirectly to a communal body."

During his interviews with the Viceroy, he had emphasised the national character of the Congress organisation and said that he attached considerable importance to the declaration that the provisional plan was intended as a preliminary step towards the achievement of the cherished goal of independence of India. He had also made it plain to His Excellency that the Congress Working Committee wished to co-operate in every reasonable way to help to resolve the present deadlock, and the Congress had accordingly, in spite of adverse circumstances, come to Simla to participate in the conference. But whatever decision the Working Committee might take, it would require to be confirmed and ratified by the All-India Congress Committee. The fact the A. I. C. C. and other Congress committees were still under ban, and a large number of Congressmen were in internment, detention or imprisonment was creating serious obstacles in their way.

#### Talk with Viceroy

The Congress President explained the various issues on which he had sought clarification from His Excellency, and said: "I can say that the replies received from the Viceroy were satisfactory." The issues on which he sought further light and the points he impressed on the Viceroy were:—

(a) The scope and function of the proposed External Affairs Department; (b) every possible effort should be made to give a national character to the Indian Army and to bring about cordiality between the National army, the national Government and the people. The present barriers isolating them would have to go; (c) after the present war in South-East Asia it must be clearly understood that the Indian Government could not support any policy aimed at the continuation of imperialist control of any of the countries of South-East Asia, nor could it allow the use of Indian resources for the deprivation of freedom of any of these countries; (d) in regard to the Indian States, while recognising that during the interim period, the powers of the Crown Representative would continue, it was clear that the National Government would have to deal

with many matters which overlapped and had concern with the States, in regard to trade, industry, labour, etc. The barriers between the States people, the princes and members of the National Government and their associates should be removed so as to help in mutual discussions, consultations and consideration of common problems and their solution.

On the question of Caste Hindu-Muslim parity, which formed the basis of the new proposals, he said that he had impressed on the Viceroy that in the constitution of the new Government, the criterion should be the political views held by the parties and not religious belief. The Congress did not wish to attach undue importance to the fact of a few more Muslims being in the Government or there being fewer Hindus. "I raised all these issues at the conference itself, and I must say the replies His Excellency gave were to my mind reassuring," he said.

"After the settlement of those fundamental issues, the conference came to consider the strength and composition of the new Executive Council," said Maulana Azad. "The conference was adjourned to enable private and informal talks to be carried on amongst the parties for a settlement. You know the conversation led to no results.

"In the course of those informal talks the position taken up by Mr. Jinnah was that the Muslim League on behalf of the Muslims should nominate Muslim members in the new Executive Council. The Congress found that such a position would be inconsistent with its basic national character. You must remember that as far as we are concerned it is not merely a question of seats but one affecting the fundamental principle. We were prepared to accommodate the Muslim League, but Mr. Jinnah took up an uncompromising attitude."

#### List of Names

The Viceroy asked the various groups to submit lists of names from which His Excellency would choose after consultation with party leaders. Mr. Jinnah refused to submit names. "In the interview I had with His Excellency on July 12, he told me that so far as the Muslim seats were concerned, he had endeavoured to prepare a list and seek Mr. Jinnah's approval," said Maulana Azad. (The Viceroy further told me that he did his best, but failed to persuade Mr. Jinnah who insisted that the Muslim nominees should be nominated by the League Working Committee. The Viceroy was unable to agree to it, and felt



it was not profitable to proceed with the proposals at present.

"Two points arise at present. The first is that the attitude of the Muslim League has been responsible for the failure of the conference. The second point which emerges from the refusal of the Muslim League is that it is for Lord Wavell to decide whether to go forward or not. His Excellency has decided not to proceed for the present. In this connection I must say what I said at the conference. The British Government could not absolve themselves of the responsibility for the communal problem here.

#### No Regrets

"I have no regrets whatsoever for the Congress stand at this conference," Maulana Azad emphasised.

Besides what he had told the press conference there were certain details about the proceedings and there was certain correspondence which he had exchanged with the Viceroy. He was not at liberty just now to reveal them, but the country must know all about it to have a correct picture of the situation. He had written to His Excellency for their release and he hoped that these might be published shortly.

In reply to another question, he contested the claim that the Muslim League was the sole representative and authoritative organisation of the Muslims of India. In the provinces where Muslims were in a majority, there was no League Ministry. There was a Congress Ministry in the Frontier Province. In the Punjab, it was a Unionist Ministry. In Sind, Sir Ghulam Hussain depended on Congress support, and the same was the position in Assam. It could not, therefore, be claimed that the Muslim League represented all the Muslims. There was a large bloc of Muslims who had nothing to do with the League.

**DANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU**, speaking to press correspondents, gave his reactions to the present situation arising from the failure of the Simla Conference and said: "I am naturally disappointed that all this effort should have ended in this way. But, having become through many experiences a somewhat hard-boiled politician, I am not terribly dejected about anything.

"What really distresses one is not just the result or want of result of this conference, but the background in which our problems are usually considered; this is to say, that they

somehow resolve themselves into some aspect of the communal problem.

"Fundamentally, the communal problem as well as many other problems, if you analyse them, become a kind of conflict between mediaevalism and modernism, between the mediaeval outlook and the modern outlook. Obviously, it is not a question of a seat or a job here and there.

"The Congress represents more than any other group the modern outlook, politically and economically, and if I may say so, nationally and internationally. The Muslim League or any other communal organisation inevitably not only represents the particular claims of a group but represents them in a mediaeval context.

#### Real Rub

"Politics considered in terms of religious communities is wholly inconsistent with both democracy and any modern conception of politics or economics. There lies the real rub. To give in to this mediaeval conception is to throw back the whole course of development in India, political and economic, and try to build a structure which does not fit in with the realities of today in any department of life. You can never ignore realities for long and if you try to do so, you do so at your peril.

"That is the essence of the communal problem, so far as I am concerned, and not a question of services or jobs or anything else, and India will have to decide not today, but tomorrow or the day after, whether it is going to be a democratic modern country or an undemocratic mediaeval country. The latter choice is really ruled out because it just cannot be done by any country today.

"The normal choice for countries today is not between mediaevalism and democracy but what might be called just political democracy or something more, that is, economic democracy also, which means Socialism in some form or other.

"At the back of all these superficial conflicts, which are sometimes represented by individuals, are, of course, impersonal forces at work. Lord Wavell, for instance, occupied a leading position as Viceroy and no doubt his personality counts. Mr. Gandhi or the Congress President also occupy leading positions and what they may say or do counts. So also Mr. Jinnah. But behind all these individuals are those impersonal forces which both control and push on those individuals. Lord Wavell

ultimately must function within the limits of British policy. Congressmen must function within the limits of Indian nationalism and Indian independence. What Mr. Jinnah's urges and limitations are I am not competent to say.

**"So, it is not a question really of individual 'bona fides' in the matter but the conflict of impersonal forces, primarily the British power in India and Indian nationalism and secondarily certain mediaeval urges in India plus various fear complexes and modern progressive tendencies.**

A Canadian correspondent asked if Pandit Nehru's point was that basic British policy in India was to hang on to power in India at any cost, and that if there was a conflict British policy must be in opposition to Indian nationalism.

### **Fundamental conflict**

Pandit Nehru replied there was a fundamental conflict between British Imperialism and Indian nationalism but circumstances and many new factors changed that policy. "I do think that the world situation as it is today and as it will be tomorrow are exercising a powerful pressure on British policy to come to some terms with the Indian people. These terms they would like to be as favourable as possible to British interests in India. This is natural, but I think they must realise that the old order in India cannot possibly continue, even though Mr. Churchill would like it to continue."

"I do not mean," Pandit Nehru went on in reply to a further question, "the average member of the Muslim League is mediaeval. I think there are many progressive people in the Muslim League, who, once the lid of mediaevalism is removed, would become political radicals."

"It happens in the circumstances of today that certain questions have been made to cover up and obscure all the really important political and economic issues in the country. That happens sometimes."

"What are the important issues, after all? The first issue in India is the agrarian problem. Allied to it is the industrial problem. You cannot solve the land problem without solving the industrial problem. They are locked and interlocked into each other. These are fundamental questions which apply to the Hindu and Muslim alike. The misfortune is they get

covered up by these complexes and prejudices, which, however superficial they may be, become formidable obstacles at the moment."

"The so-called communal problem in India has no deep roots. By that I do not deny its importance at the present stage. It is very important, but it has nevertheless no deep roots and, therefore, I do not think that a solution of it will take a long time once it gets going, because immediately the mediaeval lid is removed, the real problems of the day come up, and they have no application to Hindu or Muslim as such."

Pandit Nehru referred to the attitude of the people in the Middle East countries and said although these people had sympathy on religious grounds with their co-religionists in India or elsewhere, there was no appreciation or understanding of this conversion of politics into a chequer board of religious communities. He also invited foreign correspondents, in particular, to suppose what would happen if America for instance was divided into electoral constituencies for Catholics, Methodists, Jews and various other Christian and other sects. "You cannot imagine any democratic system being based on such a thing. Yet, that is what is happening in India today. Inevitably you produce conditions in which each community with its separate electorates, thinks in terms of its special group interests."

**"If you have separate electorate in any country under the sun, I guarantee you will have problems worse than the communal problem in India"**

Replying to the Muslim League claim that Muslims were a separate nation, Pandit Nehru said: "I will admit that circumstances may produce not a separate nation but a group which is so anti-national that it may be considered a separate nation. Such a thing may develop. But the real thing is today it is beside the point to talk about nations as such. The modern tendency is for the idea of a nation not to be confused with the idea of a State."

### **Multi-national**

"The biggest countries today are multi-national."

"If it pleases Mr. Jinnah to consider him as belonging to a separate nation, that matter ends. He can call himself that. It does not solve any problem. Even if there are two, three or five nations the problem is how are they together?"

How were the fears of the Muslims to be disarmed? asked a correspondent.

"You cannot disarm fears", Pandit Nehru replied, "Fear is a complex for which you require psycho-analytical treatment. It is an odd thing that it has been said, by some prominent members of the Muslim League, though not by Mr. Jinnah himself, that the Muslims are far stronger and more powerful and if British rule was not there, they could dominate others. On the other hand they talked of fear of being dominated by the majority. It is absurd to talk of anyone dominating 80 or 90 millions of people. The whole idea is fantastic. My plan of thinking is entirely different from Mr. Jinnah's. It may be lower but it is different."

What is the way out? was the next question asked. "There may be many ways out," Pandit Nehru replied. "Obviously one way out which for the moment is not available is for the third party to retire from the scene, either actually or theoretically. I mean there should be no question of the third party imposing its will and other parties should realise they have to face the issues themselves without that third party. Then they will face realities. Or in the alternative—obviously, a very desirable alternative—other parties should pull together."

"The other possible courses really depend on the growth of almost overwhelming strength on the part of one or more groups which pull together so that their influence might be felt by all the remaining parties concerned."

"Lastly, there might well be, owing to the deterioration of the economic situation, a complete collapse leading partly to chaos and partly to revolt and revolution in various parts of the country. India is fairly on the verge of it, considering the economic situation, in spite of much money having been made at the top."

### III

**M**R. JINNAH in a press Conference said:

"On a final examination and analysis of the Wavell plan, we found that it was a snare." He added: "There was the combination consisting of the Gandhi-Hindu Congress, which stands for India's Hindu national independence as one India, and the latest exponent of geographical unity, Lord Wavell, and

Glancy,—Khizar, who are bent upon creating disruption among the Mussalmans in the Punjab, and we were sought to be pushed into this arrangement, which if we had agreed to, as proposed by Lord Wavell, we should have signed our death warrant; for, let us honestly examine the Wavell plan.

"Our stand has been, and we have repeatedly made it clear to the British Government: times out of number since 1940, that we cannot consider or enter into any provisional interim Government unless a declaration is made by the British Government guaranteeing the right of self determination of Muslims, and pledging that, after the war, or so soon as it may be possible, the British Government would establish Pakistan, having regard to the basic principles laid down in the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League, passed in March, 1940.

"This was the condition precedent No. 1 to our considering any provisional arrangement. Condition No. 2 was that we are not a minority but a nation, and we can only enter into a provisional arrangement, having regard to the necessities and exigencies of the moment created by the war, and fully co-operate in the prosecution of the war, and that in any arrangement we claimed an equal number in the proposed Executive.

### "Contradictory Proposals"

"The Wavell proposals set at nought both these conditions and called upon us to make the severest sacrifice. I know in his broadcast he said that these proposals are without prejudice to any future constitution or constitutions of India. While in one breath it is impressed upon us that these proposals are without prejudice to and do not prejudice the Pakistan issue, yet the plan in fact contradicts this in the next breath by its very terms.

"It is obvious to any intelligent man that if we accept this arrangement, the Pakistan issue will be shelved and put into cold storage indefinitely, whereas the Congress will have secured under this arrangement what they want, namely, a clear road for their advance towards securing Hindu national independence of India because the future executive will work as a unitary Government of India and we know that this interim or provisional arrangement will have a way of settling down for an unlimited period and all the forces in the proposed Executive, plus the known policy of the British Government and Lord

Wavell's strong inclination for a united India would completely jeopardise us; for, I will quote Mr. Amery, who has tried his best, but in the result, has given us cold comfort and his statement is a very clear indication and a pointer to the British policy:

"Speaking in the House of Commons, where he presented the White Paper, he said as follows: 'The ideal to which we have always looked is that of an all-India union in which the States would play their full part. At the same time we have also recognised the possibility that agreement between Hindus and Muslims on any form of Indian unity may be unattainable. Any interim advance, therefore, must in no way prejudice the question whether the ultimate settlement is based on a united or a divided India.'

### Other Minorities

"Next, in the proposed Executive, we would be reduced to a minority of one-third. All the other minorities, such as the Scheduled Castes, Sikhs and Christians have the same goal as the Congress. They have their grievances as minorities, but their goal and ideology is and cannot be different from or otherwise than that of a united India. Ethnically and culturally they are very closely knitted to Hindu society.

"I am not against full justice being done to all the minorities, and they should be fully safeguarded and protected as such, wherever they may be. But in actual working and practice, invariably their vote will be against us, and there is no safeguard for us except the Viceroy's veto, which, it is well known to any constitutionalist, cannot be exercised lightly as an everyday business against majority decisions with regard to the policy and the principles that will have to be laid down as measures adopted both administrative and legislative.

"On the top of this came the last straw on the camel's back—that even about the five members of the Muslim bloc which were allotted to us communal-wise, which is the essence of the Wavell proposals, we were told that the Muslim League was not entitled to nominate all the Muslim representatives as our chosen spokesmen, and there were two claimants—the Congress, which claimed two and Glancy-Khizar, on behalf of the Punjab, claimed one. But finally we broke as Lord Wavell insisted upon his having one non-League nominee of Malik Khizar. We would have emerged out of this conference minus everything and we would

have entirely betrayed our people. It would have been an abject surrender on our part of all we stand for, and it would have been the death-knell of the Muslim League. This was the position which faced us and we found that it was impossible for us to accept this arrangement."

### IV

Irreconcilable differences between the Congress and Mr. Jinnah and not the allotment of a seat to a Punjabi Muslim—as sought to be made out by Mr. Jinnah—were the real cause of the failure of the Simla Conference, says Malik Khizar Hayat Khan-Tiwana, Premier of the Punjab, in a statement to the press. "Mr. Jinnah," says Malik Khizar Hayat, "seems to desire to divert attention from his differences with the Congress and to concentrate upon me."

The following is the text of the statement: "I am reluctant to add to the number of statements which are being issued by the leaders who attended the Simla Conference to explain its unfortunate failure and to justify their attitude. But I find myself compelled to take public notice of the statement made by Mr. Jinnah at a press conference on July 14. It is regrettable to note that in spite of Lord Wavell's appeal to all leaders to ensure that there are no recriminations, Mr. Jinnah has lost no time in indulging in unjust and unwarranted vituperations."

### Real Facts

"In the course of his statement he accuses me of disrupting the Punjab Muslims and attributes the failure of the conference largely to the Viceroy's insistence on including a Punjabi Muslim in his Executive Council. What are the real facts? Many years ago, that great Muslim, Sir Fazl-i-Hussain, united the Punjab Muslims in the Unionist Party. They remained united under him throughout the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms period and under Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, and in 1937 this group of united Muslims of the Punjab followed their leader when he entered into the Sikander-Jinnah Pact. So long as Mr. Jinnah respected that fact, the Muslims of the Punjab were united. Last year, Mr. Jinnah, for reasons best known to himself, decided to break the pact and to endeavour to change the basis upon which the Punjab Muslims had united."

"I was compelled to stand by my pledges, and in doing so I have been supported by an overwhelming majority of Punjabi Muslims. No one regrets more than I do the present differences between sections of the Punjabi Muslims; but it was Mr. Jinnah and not I who disrupted them by breaking a solemn pact.

"As to Mr. Jinnah's complaint that I claimed the inclusion of a Punjabi Muslim, the facts are that H. E. the Viceroy invited me to suggest names representing the party of which I have the honour to be the leader; from these names the Viceroy was to make his own selection. I acted accordingly and I think I would have been wrong if I had failed to do so.

"I do not regret my action. It appeared to me that the Punjab had the strongest claim to be given at least one Muslim representative. The Punjab has played a leading part in the war, its soldiers and its people should not be allowed to go unvoiced. Moreover, the Punjab is the only province which has maintained a popular government consistently since the beginning of Provincial Autonomy and that, too, a government representative of all the main communities of the province. And the Punjab, so far as I know, had had almost continuously a Punjab Muslim representative in the Executive Council since 1910.

The insinuation that I was acting under any official influence, is quite untrue. I acted in what I considered to be the best interests of the Punjab and the Punjab Muslims.

"Everyone who has read Mr. Jinnah's statement must be struck by the inconsistency of his arguments. He starts by declaring that the Wavell Plan was a snare, that it was completely unacceptable because it did not meet the fundamental conditions upon which the Muslim League had always insisted.

"The first part of Mr. Jinnah's statement clearly means that the League could not and never would accept Lord Wavell's plan. Then Mr. Jinnah performs an abrupt somersault and says that the League broke with the plan because one seat on the Executive Council was to be given to a Punjabi Muslim.

"Mr. Jinnah is obviously ill at ease about his position. He knows that the conference failed on issues more basic than the allotment of a single seat. It is clear from his own statement and those made by the Congress leaders that there were irreconcilable difference between them and Mr. Jinnah and these were the

fundamental causes of the failure of the conference. Because of his failure to reach a settlement with the Congress leaders, Mr. Jinnah refused to submit a panel of names to the Viceroy.

### Congress Claim

"There is nothing to show that the Congress has abandoned its claim to represent a section of Indian Muslims or its demand that some part of the Muslim representation must go to its nominees. Lord Wavell has made it clear that he never showed his complete tentative list of nominations to any of the leaders. Thus the conference never reached the stage at which I had to press my demand for the inclusion of a Punjabi Muslim, nor did it break down on that account. Mr. Jinnah seems to desire to divert attention from his differences with the Congress and to concentrate it upon me. I do not propose here to discuss the merits of the League and the Congress cases.

"But I must repeat that the differences between them were the cause of the failure of the conference—not the allotment of a seat to a Punjabi Muslim. The present negotiations failed on account of certain fundamental differences between Mr. Jinnah and the Congress—differences which have been evident during the Cripps negotiations and again during the Gandhi-Jinnah talks—and, therefore, the failure can in no way be attributed to the claim for the inclusion of a Punjabi Muslim in the Executive Council.

"Before the Simla Conference, I had made it clear that I would yield to none in pressing the claims of the Muslims in an All-India settlement, nor during the conference did I do so in regard to the quantum of Muslim representation. But the question of the distribution of Muslim seats is distinct from this. Mr. Jinnah's totalitarian claim to monopolise Muslim seats so that Muslims who do not belong to the League go unrepresented, cannot be accepted without reserve, I can safely assert that a Punjabi Muslim would be not a wit behind a Muslim drawn from any other source in maintaining the rights and claims of Indian Muslims."

### V

THE fact that the Sikhs had been recognised as one of the four main elements of India's national life whose consent is necessary for framing the constitution of India had

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made Pakistan an impossibility unless the Sikhs agree to it, said Master Tara Singh, the Sikh representative at the Leaders' Conference, at a press conference.

Expressing satisfaction that such recognition had been given by the British Government, Master Tara Singh said: "Pakistan is not an issue between the Congress and the Muslim League as it has hitherto been wrongly considered to be. It is mainly a Sikh-Muslim question, because the Sikhs are mainly affected by it. So, the Muslims must recognise that, just as they cannot submit to Hindu domination, the Sikhs cannot submit to Muslim domination for the same, if not better reasons. The Sikhs are groaning even under the present Muslim domination in the Punjab and they have to make

efforts to get rid of it as soon as an opportunity offers itself at the end of the war."

Replying to questions, Master Tara Singh said that he was fundamentally opposed to Pakistan and he would demand the establishment of an independent Sikh state if the rest of India conceded Pakistan to the Muslims.

The proposed Sikh state would be established in Central Punjab, including the Lahore and Amritsar districts, where the Sikhs had their holy places. When a pressman drew his attention to the fact that the Sikhs were not a majority in the Central Punjab, Master Tara Singh said that he was basing his demand on the analogy of Palestine, which had been declared a Jewish national home even though the Jews formed only 10 per cent. of the population.



MASTER TARA SINGH AND HIS ADVISERS

## UNIONIST PROTEST

(By KHAN BAHADUR SHEIKH FAIZ MOHAMED,  
M. B. E.)

**I**MMEDIATELY after the failure of the Wavell Conference on July 14, the Qaid-i-Azam made a statement to the representatives of the press. A critical study of this statement shows that it is in the nature of an

apology for the attitude which he adopted at the Conference. It is a pity that in the excitement of the moment he has tried to find fault with foes and friends alike, with the result that his statement has been reduced to a jumble of inconsistencies.

Mr. Jinnah starts by alleging that the Viceroy, the Congress, the Governor of the Punjab and Malik Khizar Hayat Khan had formed a combination to kill the Muslim League. The insinuation is not only fantastic



but is also contrary to facts, the correctness of which no impartial observer of events can impeach. Whatever one may have to say as regards the feasibility of the Wavell plan, it goes without saying that Lord Wavell had been very keen about its success and sincerely wished to end the deadlock. It was for this reason that the plan aimed at an interim settlement without raising the thorny question of the future constitution. Further Lord Wavell made it quite clear even in his initial broadcast that effect would be given to his plan only if the two major parties, namely, the Congress and the Muslim League, agreed to work it. In the face of these facts, it is preposterous to suggest that Lord Wavell had entered into a conspiracy with the Congress and Malik Khizar Hayat Khan to wreck and defeat his own plan.

Once it is admitted that Lord Wavell was sincerely anxious to see that his plan succeeded, it does not stand to reason to say that the Governor of the Punjab had made an attempt to torpedo it for the sake of keeping Malik Khizar Hyat Khan in office. No provincial Governor would make such an attempt in so important a matter, particularly when it was understood that the Wavell plan had the approval of all the parties in England. Thus there was no justification at all for Mr. Jinnah to drag Sir Bertrand Glancy into the controversy. He seems to have done so merely to divert attention from himself.

### League's Conditions

After giving vent to his fury against the Viceroy and the Governor of the Punjab, Mr. Jinnah wants us honestly to examine the plan. He asserts that since 1940 the Muslim League had made it clear that *it will not consider or enter into any provisional interim Government unless two conditions were satisfied, i.e., first a declaration to be made by the British Government to establish Pakistan as soon as possible after the war and, secondly, recognition of Muslims as a separate nation entitled to an equal number of seats in the proposed Executive Council.* Now it is an open secret that the Wavell plan did not satisfy any of either of these two conditions. Lord Wavell made it quite clear in his broadcast that his plan related to an interim Provisional Government. There was no commitment in it on the part of His Majesty's Government to establish Pakistan after the war or to recognise Indian Muslims as a separate nation and to give them an equal number of seats in the proposed Executive Council.

In fact Lord Wavell had definitely stated that the number of seats to be allotted to the Muslims would be five out of a total of fifteen and that of the remaining ten seats, five were to go to the Caste Hindus, three to other Indian communities and two to Englishmen—the Viceroy himself and the Commander-in-Chief. All this had been made known to Mr. Jinnah and others before the Conference began. In the circumstances, may one venture to ask what induced Mr. Jinnah to participate in the Conference? He would have been more consistent, logical and dignified if he had declined to take part in the proceedings of the Conference on the ground that the plan did not satisfy the two conditions on the fulfilment of which alone the Muslim League could join any interim provisional government. If he had done this he would have strengthened the position of the Muslim League. By his participating in the Conference, despite the non-fulfilment of the two conditions precedent, he has given the impression that after all the Muslim League is not serious about its demand.

### Muslim League's Claim

This is made painfully clear in the concluding part of Mr. Jinnah's statement. I will quote his very words: "On the top of this came the last straw on the camel's back that even about the five members of the Muslim bloc which were allotted to us communalwise, which is the essence of the Wavell proposals, we were told that the Muslim League was not entitled to nominate all the Muslim representatives as our chosen spokesmen and there were two claimants—the Congress which claimed two and Glancy-Khizar, on behalf of the Punjab, claimed one. This move on the part of these two went at the very root and the very existence of the Muslim League regarding its position, character and status. But finally we broke as Lord Wavell insisted upon his having a non-League nominee of Malik Khizar Hayat representing the Punjab Muslims."

This means that if the Muslim League had been allowed to nominate all the five Muslim members it would have joined the interim provisional Government. But what about the two conditions on which so much stress is laid in the earlier part of Mr. Jinnah's statement? Does it not imply that he was prepared to forego these conditions if he could have the pleasure and satisfaction of sending all the five members to the proposed

Executive Council? Was this really so?

As regards the claim of the Muslim League to represent the whole of Muslim India, no one would be happier than myself if it were really so. Unfortunately, however, it is a claim without substance. I am one of those who ardently and sincerely wish that the Muslim League should represent the whole of Muslim India. This is possible too but only if Mr. Jinnah can be prevailed upon to change his tactics. He should have by now realised that by calling names and shouting at those who differ from him, he can not cow down all. It is not difficult to see that Mr. Jinnah's fury against Malik Khizar Hyat Khan is the outcome of the latter's refusal to be bullied into submission at the instance of the handful of disgruntled members of the Punjab Assembly. Having turned out the Malik Sahib from the Muslim League in circumstances which need no repetition, it does not lie in Mr. Jinnah's mouth to find fault with him for his boldly coming forward to claim representation for the Punjab Muslims a large majority of whom are to-day non-Leaguers, thanks to the wrong tactics of Mr. Jinnah himself. Politics is a game of give and take. Unfortunately, Mr. Jinnah wants to take all and give nothing. As long as this policy is adhered to the Muslim League will instead of gaining strength, go on becoming weaker and weaker to the great misfortune of the Muslim community or nation.

We are passing through very difficult times and complete unity among all sections of the nation is the craving need of the moment. Such a unity is not likely to be achieved if Mr. Jinnah and his minions go on issuing "fatwas" of apostacy and renegacy against all those who differ from them. Let Mr. Jinnah, therefore, change his tactics. Let him take a leaf out of the early history of Islam. Let him try to convert those who differ from him to his point of view by courtesy, kindness and persuasion which are the necessary attributes of a great leader. Let him bend and carry the day. There is such a thing as stooping to conquer.

## II

BY NAWAB SIR MUZAFFAR ALI QAZIL BASH

**C**ERTAIN Punjab Muslim Leaguers anxious to damage our leader, Malik Khizar Hyat

Khan, in the eyes of the Punjab Muslims, have condemned the part he played in the Simla conference and have tried to mislead the public and confuse the real issue. These attempts are due to personal differences and bitterness arising out of parity quarrels.

It is said that the conference would have been a great success for the Muslim League, had not Malik Khizar Hayat Khan appeared as a stumbling-block. The statements of the leading members of the Muslim League who have been taking an active part in its councils, show that this wild charge cannot be sustained.

Chaudhri Khaliq-uz-Zaman, a member of the Muslim League Working Committee, in a statement on July 13, has held that the Congress and the British Government were responsible for the failure of the conference.

Sir Nazimuddin, ex-premier of Bengal, in a statement on July 19, said: 'Although it looks as if the conference broke up because Mr. Jinnah would not give in, in reality it is the old issue, give it whatever name you like—call it communal, mediaeval or national.'

Sir Nazimuddin also said that the Unionists were with the League on fundamentals, but had not joined the League because of provincial party politics.

Finally, the statement of Lord Wavell at the leaders conference on July 14 gives a clear picture of the causes which led to the failure of the conference and shows that it failed because of fundamental differences between the League and the Congress, and not because of the position taken up by the Punjab Premier.

### Premier's Position

It has been said that the Unionists were not justified in asking for a seat for a Muslim as the party is non-communal. The Premier's position was that there must be a Punjabi representative on the Executive Council, as there has always been.

As the Punjab is one of the two major provinces where Muslims are in a majority, its representative is naturally a Muslim. The majority of the Unionists are Muslims and they represent the Muslims of the Punjab. Clearly, the Premier was justified in claiming that there should be on the Executive Council a Punjabi Muslim enjoying the confidence of the Muslims of the Punjab.

Malik Khizar Hayat Khan has been blamed for not supporting Mr. Jinnah and other



Muslim League delegates, and it has been said that he has departed from his own declared policy. There is no truth in these allegations.

Malik Khizar Hayat Khan has always stood up for the rights of Muslims, and in the conference, too, he did so when he supported the claim of the Muslims to parity with caste Hindus. He differed from Mr. Jinnah only

in demanding representation for the Punjabi Muslims.

No true Muslim can blame him for doing so, for the record of the Punjab Muslims show that they are as staunch supporters of the Muslim rights as any other Muslims in India and there could not possibly be any fear that Muslim interests would suffer at the hands of their representative.

## BRITISH PRESS REACTIONS

THERE can be no doubt of the genuine regret felt both in Great Britain and in India at the failure of the Simla Conference to reach any sort of agreement, writes the *Economist*.

It is perhaps a little early to conclude that Lord Wavell's initiative has completely broken down. But if it has, the results are likely to be unfortunate. In Britain this second failure inevitably puts India down to a low place in the agenda of public business and it joins the category of hopeless questions. In India it can only deepen the sense of embittered frustration and intensify communal bitterness. Even as clear a demonstration as this that the obstacles to Indian self-government lie in India and not in London is unlikely to absolve the British Government from being the great scapegoat—in spite of the universal respect that Lord Wavell has won.

It is already being attacked both in India and at home for not proceeding with the Congress but without the Moslems—in spite of the fact that one of the conditions on which the Conference was held and which were accepted by the Congress was that an agreement must be secured. Surely to form a wholly or an almost wholly Hindu government would confirm all the worst fears of the Muslims and make an ultimate agreement—without which self-government cannot work—all the more difficult to secure.

It is difficult to see what can now be done. Mr. Bevin some weeks ago was arguing that the right thing to do was to defer the task of constitution drafting and give Indians for some years the practical experience of working under an unwritten constitution. But this is what Lord Wavell was trying to do and it has failed.

Sir Stafford Cripps has taken the opposite line of suggesting that more clarity about the ultimate intentions is the only solvent of suspicions and has proposed that general elections should be held throughout India to ascertain the real strength of the parties. The Muslims too are pressing for elections confident that they would confirm the Muslim League's claim to be the exclusive representative of the Muslim of India. This may be true and it would be as well to get the basic facts straight. But would it help to a solution? Will the Congress yield to any statistical demonstration?

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### Viceroy's Decision

The *New Statesmen and Nation* comments:

There is a touch of genius about Lord Wavell and his Gandhi-like statement taking on his own shoulders, as Viceroy and representative of the British in India, the responsibility for the failure of the Simla Conference was the best possible way of preventing an outbreak of mutual recrimination and a remarkable proof that an Englishman can sometimes profit out of the wisdom of the east. In the growth of a popular belief that the Viceroy is really impartial and sincerely desires a settlement of the communal issue lies the best hope that a way round the present stalemate can yet be found.

Confronted with Mr. Jinnah's adamant refusal to co-operate in an Executive Council unless all Muslim members held the Muslim League's "coupon", Lord Wavell decided to dissolve his Conference and admit the defeat of his proposals. His decision, we believe, was sound. Had he formed a Council of men of

his own choice, providing on paper for Hindu-Muslim parity, the League's boycott would have left him, in fact, dependent for support exclusively on the Congress; and the League represents too substantial a proportion of Muslim opinion for its exclusion from any central authority to be possible.

The Congress is entitled to complain that Mr. Jinnah is thus being conceded the right to exercise a perpetual veto on any constitutional proposal, but to criticise Mr. Jinnah for "intransigence" leads nowhere and his fears of communal discrimination against Muslim minorities may be accepted as genuine and deep. Sir Stafford Cripps has suggested that as a way out of the deadlock elections should now be held and that a Constituent Assembly should debate the constitution.

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### "Not final Failure"

When Lord Wavell, announcing the failure of the Simla Conference, magnanimously assumed responsibility for the regrettable result, he revealed a brilliant flash of that high quality of imaginative diplomacy which has endeared him to India in a way in which few of his predecessors had been, writes *Time and Tide*.

It is precisely that quality which will encourage Indian statesmen to appreciate more sharply that it was Indian statesmanship and not British which failed to meet a great challenge. In a sentence, the Wavell plan for Indianisation of the administration of India was the securing of representation of the principal political parties in the Central Government. What Lord Wavell now seeks to avoid is that bitter communal dissension which might so easily jeopardise future efforts for a solution or, worse still, end in bloodshed.

Primarily, the present failure stresses the lack of sympathy between the Congress representing the Hindu majority and the Muslim League which claims to speak for the overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims. For the crux of the breakdown is the Muslim fear or, at any rate, suspicion of the consequences of a majority rule and the League refuses to believe that the Congress will not try somehow to impose its will at the expense of the Muslims. Yet, although Lord Wavell has announced an unhappy ending to what the vast majority of Indians had come to believe was a genuine attempt by Britain to give India a "new deal", it is by no means to be regarded as a final

failure. What is now more clear perhaps than ever before to foreigners, especially Americans, is that upon the shoulders of the leaders of the Congress and the League devolve the most onerous responsibilities for putting India firmly on the right road to self-government; the British Government can make a valuable contribution to this desirable end, but it can be no more than a contribution.

The bitter-sweet reflections, inspired by a survey of all the statements issued during and at the conclusion of the Conference, are that Indian politicians are highly suspicious of each other, that while it was Mr. Gandhi as leader of the Congress who wrecked the Cripps plan in 1942; it is Mr. Jinnah of the Muslim League who bears perhaps the most substantial burden of responsibility for the defeat of the Wavell plan, and that the world may see clearly, if only partially, the weight of that vast responsibility for the control of the destinies of India's millions which is Britain's.

The Conference has not been in vain; further negotiations will be pursued, for in spite of herself it is the avowed purpose of His Majesty's Government to lift India to the status of a self-governing State—a status to which historians are bound to recognise Lord Wavell has done more than any other Viceroy to assist in raising her.

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### Wavell's "Enhanced Reputation".

Lord Wavell's magnanimous invitation to the various Indian sections to blame him and not themselves for the breakdown of the Simla Conference has been taken up with alacrity in both the Congress and the Muslim League camps, writes the *Spectator*.

Mr. Jinnah accuses the British, including, of course, the Viceroy with setting a snare to entrap the Muslim League into accepting places on the Council, in which it would have only a minority representation. Maylana Azad is indignant that the refusal of the Muslim League to submit names to the Viceroy has not been followed by an announcement that the Viceroy would choose a new Council without the League—though it had been made clear at the outset of the negotiations that no new step would be taken without a substantial agreement between the Congress and the League. Those arguments are irrelevant now.

The Simla Conference has failed completely, Lord Wavell alone—*pace* Lord Wavell—

coming out of it with an enhanced reputation. As the dust settles, that may prove to be a fact of some importance. For the moment it suits both sides to criticise Lord Wavell as a means of diverting attention from their own shortcomings; but there is little doubt that in fact they feel for him an increased respect.

For a period, as the Viceroy says, the situation must remain as it is. The Japanese war has to be finished—and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru has displayed his statesmanship by announcing that the Congress will not “tolerate” (whatever that may mean) the return of Dutch, British or American imperialism to the countries freed from Japan.

Whatever the immediate future in India the Cripps Offer of 1942 including the right of the predominantly Muslim provinces to contract out of the proposed Indian Union stands. The Congress which professes, of course, itself to represent a united India is radically opposed to such a solution; but after the failure of the Simla Conference, attention may be turned to such a division more and more. Yet the holding of provincial elections and the resumption of democratic government in all the provinces where it is suspended might change the whole situation for the better.

## VICEROY-JINNAH LETTERS

THE Viceroy on July 9, made it clear to Mr. Jinnah that he could not give any guarantee that all the Muslim members of the proposed new Council would necessarily be members of the Muslim League. His Excellency further made it clear that he could not commit himself to give a similar guarantee to any other party.

This is brought out in the correspondence, released between Mr. Jinnah and the Viceroy.

The following is the text of the correspondence :

**Letter from the Secretary to the Governor-General to Mr. Jinnah, dated Simla, June 29, 1945 :**

“Dear Mr. Jinnah, The following is the action which His Excellency would like you to take, if after consultation with your Working Committee, you are able to accept the suggestion he made at this morning’s meeting of the Conference :

“(1) To prepare and send him a list giving the names of members of the Muslim League who in your opinion could suitably be included in the proposed Executive Council. The number of names in this list should be not less than eight or more than 12.

“(2) If you think you can usefully suggest, for possible inclusion in the Executive Council, the names of persons of any community who are not members of the Muslim League, you are at liberty to add them to your list, keeping them distinct from the names of Muslim League members.

“His Excellency hopes he made it clear this morning that this is entirely optional.

“His Excellency’s intention is to scrutinise the lists sent to him and to see whether, from them and possibly from additional names of his own, he can, on paper, form an Executive Council likely to be acceptable to the parties and to His Majesty’s Government. If so, he will consult leaders, including yourself, and thereafter decide whether it is worth while making definite proposals to the Conference. Yours Sincerely, (Secretary).”

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### League Executive’s View

**Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Lord Wavell, dated July 7, 1945 :—**

“Dear Lord Wavell, I placed before my Working Committee the suggestion made by Your Excellency at the last meeting of the Conference and communicated to me by your Private Secretary in his letter dated the 29th June, 1945. The Working Committee, after careful consideration, desire me to convey to you their views, which are :—

“(1) With regard to your suggestion for submitting a panel of names of the members of the Muslim League for inclusion in the proposed Executive Council, the Working Committee desires to point out that when a similar proposal was made by Your Excellency’s predecessor, Lord Linlithgow, in connection with his offer of August, 1940, the Working Committee opposed it and, when its objections were brought to the notice of Lord Linlithgow, he dropped the proposal and suggested another alternative in his letter dated the 25th of September, 1940, addressed to the President of the All-India Muslim League, an extract from which is given below :

“I appreciate, however, the difficulties which, you made it clear to me, confronted

you in connection with the formulation of the panel which I had earlier suggested to you; and in the light of our discussion I am content that the selection of representatives, while resting with the Governor-General, should be based in the case of the Muslim League (and, should they so desire, of the other parties to be represented in my Council), not on a panel formally submitted, but on confidential discussion between the leader of the party concerned and myself.

"This alternative was acceptable to the Muslim League. The Working Committee is of the opinion that the procedure settled on the previous occasion should be followed in the present case so far as the Muslim League is concerned.

"(2) Further, the Working Committee is emphatically of the opinion that all the Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council should be chosen from the Muslim League, subject to a confidential discussion between Your Excellency and the President of the Muslim League, before they are finally recommended by you to the Crown for appointment.

"The Working Committee feels very strongly on this point and regards it as one of the fundamental principles.

"(3) Besides the foregoing, certain other points were also discussed in the Working Committee, particularly the question of providing an effective safeguard against unfair decisions of the majority. While the Committee appreciated the remarks in the statement of the Secretary of State in the House of Commons that the power of veto will be exercised, by the Viceroy to protect the minority interests it was felt that some other effective safeguard would be necessary in the interest of smooth working of the interim arrangement. It was, however, thought that this question could be settled after the strength and the composition of the Executive Council was decided upon.

"I have given in the above paragraphs the unanimous opinion of my Working Committee and I am ready and willing, if you so desire, to meet you and explain the reasons and the grounds for the decision arrived at by the Working Committee.—Yours Sincerely (M. A. Jinnah)."

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**Letter from Sir Evan Jenkins to Mr. Jinnah dated July 9, 1945.**

"Dear Mr. Jinnah—His Excellency asks me to thank you for your letter of 7th

July, and to say that he will be glad to see you at 4 p. m. this afternoon or later this afternoon if that is more convenient to you. Perhaps you would be kind enough to ask your secretary to ring me up and confirm the time.—Yours Sincerely E.M. Jenkins."

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**Letter from Lord Wavell to Mr. Jinnah dated July 9, 1945.**

"Dear Mr. Jinnah,—At the end of our talk yesterday evening you said that I could make your problem easier if I replied in writing to your letter of 7th July. I do not think you expect any comment now on the first and third points in that letter. Our talk was concerned mainly with the second point, 'that all the Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council should be chosen from the Muslim League.....before they are finally recommended to the Crown for appointment.'

"I fully appreciate your difficulties, but regret that I am unable to give you the guarantee you wish, i. e. that all the Muslim members of the proposed new Council shall necessarily be members of the Muslim League. As I explained to you, I cannot commit myself to give similar guarantee to any other party. I have to attempt to form an Executive Council representative, competent, and generally acceptable. But, of course I cannot compel any person or any party to co-operate in my own solution if they do not wish to do so.

"It will help me greatly if you will let me have names from the Muslim League and I sincerely hope you will do so. I asked for eight, but will certainly accept five if you do not wish to send more. You can consider later whether any solution I put forward is acceptable to you.

"During the next two or three years decisions of great importance will have to be taken by the Government of India, whatever its composition may be. These decisions—on demobilisation, economic development, taxation, trade and so on—cannot wait, and it is the hope of H.M.G. that the Executive Council responsible for them will be one in which the major political parties are represented. It will be, of course, my principal duty to see fairplay between all parties not only in the composition of the proposed Council but in its working.

"I need the active help of your colleagues and yourself, and I am sure you will give it to me. I have no objection to your showing this letter to your colleagues, but it is not intended for publication.—Yours Sincerely (Wavell)."

**Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Lord Wavell, dated July 9, 1945.**

"Dear Lord Wavell,—I thank you for your letter of the 9th July which I placed before my Working Committee. The Committee, after giving its very careful consideration to the matter, desires me to state that it regrets very much to note that Your Excellency is not able to give the assurance that all the Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council will be selected from the Muslim League. In my letter of the 7th July I mentioned that the Committee considers this as one of the fundamental principles, and in the circumstances, I regret I am not in a position to send the names on behalf of the Muslim League for inclusion in the proposed Executive Council, as desired by you.

"I should like to assure Your Excellency that it has been the earnest desire of the Committee and myself to assist you in every reasonable way, but it is not possible for us to depart from our fundamental principles.

"I need not, therefore, at present say anything more with regard to the other points raised.—Yours Sincerely (M. A. Jinnah).

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**Letter from the Secretary to the Governor-General to Mr. Jinnah, dated July 10, 1945:**

"Dear Mr. Jinnah,—His Excellency asked me to thank you for your letter of 9th July. He will have to take two or three days to consider the position and will write to you when he has decided what to do.—Yours Sincerely. (etc).—

## **"TIME FOR INTERIM SETTLEMENT GONE"**

I

**M**R. JINNAH analysing the failure of the Simla conference on August 7 said : The first question is why did Mr. Gandhi as one of the leaders of the recognised parties, go to Simla and, having gone there, why did Mr. Gandhi not attend the conference. The reason is simple. It is to play the role of a wirepuller.

He was not merely content with being an adviser of the Congress and its Working Committee, but he constituted himself an adviser of the Viceroy and, through him, of the British nation.

Mornings and evenings the Working Committee meetings took place and he was the guiding spirit behind.

When it suits him, he represents nobody : he can talk in an individual capacity : he is not even a four-anna member of the Congress ; he undertakes fast to decide political issues ; he reduces himself to zero and consults his inner voice. Yet, when it suits him, he is the supreme dictator of the Congress. He thinks that he represents the whole of India. Mr. Gandhi is an enigma.

How could there be a settlement ? There was so much venom and bitterness against the Muslims and the Muslim League that the Congress was prepared to go to any length with two objectives. First, to hammer down,

humiliate and discourage the Muslim League, and every method was adopted to bully us, coerce us and to threaten us to surrender, and the second was to see that the Muslim League was ignored and by-passed and for that purpose, they stooped to the lowest point and threw their principles to the winds.

### **CHAMPIONS OF "QUIT INDIA"**

The Congress leaders who championed 'Quit India' and complete independence and of which they make every year declarations, went to Simla defeated, frustrated and scared and threw themselves at the feet of Lord Wavell to secure certain portfolios, because there was no question of self-government within the framework of the present constitution.

In order to be on the right side of Lord Wavell they first tried to beat down and humiliate the Muslim League and, secondly, so to work him up as to get him by-pass the League through a short-sighted and miscalculated policy adopted at Simla, which was a complete failure.

Now they accuse Lord Wavell of breach of faith and allege that he had given an assurance to ignore and by-pass the League. I do not believe it. Even if he wanted it, he could not have done it.

There are only two major parties in this

country, and Lord Wavell's broadcast was the very conception of it. Invitations issued to Mr. Gandhi and myself were on the basis that Mr. Gandhi was the recognised leader of one of the parties and myself the leader of the other. The British called them parties, but in fact they are two major nations.

There is no doubt that other minorities must be assured of safeguards, but that is not the case with the 10 crores of Muslims, who happen to be a majority, in the north-western and north-eastern zones, where they want to establish Pakistan.

Because the British turned down the Congress proposals at Simla, they accuse the British Government of having given me the veto. These people do not know the meaning of veto or they try to misrepresent the League. There is no question of veto.

The proposal was for an interim Government under the present constitution. I have already given my reasons that it was unjust and unreasonable. The Congress cannot expect us to agree to what they want, however detrimental to our interests that may be.

What does the Congress want? It wants to establish a Hindu raj. But the League wishes Hindusthan god-speed and freedom for Hindusthan. At the same time we want to establish Pakistan in the two zones where we are in a majority. Unless Mr. Gandhi and the Congress give up their dreams of establishing Hindu 'raj' and, by hook or crook, bringing the Muslims into it, for which they have been determinedly working, they cannot expect us to transfer ourselves from the British Government to a Hindu 'raj.'

People say that the conference was a failure. I would say that the conference is wound up for all time.

Since 1940, because of war we offered our hand of co-operation to Britain for defence and prosecution of war. We did not want any aggression either from Hitler or from the Mikado. In our own interests, therefore, we were ready to co-operate.

For what would we have gained otherwise. Our homes and hearths would have been bombarded both in north-eastern and north-western ones where Muslims are in a majority. If Hitler had succeeded, we would have been thrown from the frying pan into the fire. Therefore, it was a war emergency which called for an interim settlement for the successful prosecution of the war.

When Lord Wavell went to England the war in Europe had not finished. But now remember that the war in Europe is over, and the war in the Far East is almost coming to an end. Japan is concentrating in her own homelands hundreds of miles away. There is no use of talking of interim settlement now. Let us go ahead with measures for a permanent constitutional settlement.

Pakistan must be decided if the issue of freedom and independence of India is to be decided. We will never surrender on the issue of Pakistan to anybody, as our claim is a just and righteous one and is the only solution for India.

"We want to fight the elections so that they may once for all convince those who doubt our representative character. If you organise properly, with the support of the people, we will sweep the polls. The name of the League is resounding in the whole world and Muslims have now awakened to a consciousness of nationhood."

## II

**M**R. JINNAH addressing a meeting in Bombay on August 13 categorically refuted the two charges made against him by the Congress.

Characterising the charges as a stunt, Mr. Jinnah dealt with the first, namely, that the British Government had given him the veto, and the second that his attitude was intransigent and that he was obstructing the achievement of India's freedom as he was playing the game of British imperialism and, thereby, insinuating that he was carrying out the wishes of Britain.

"All this is false," asserted Mr. Jinnah, "and those who talk like this know it and they must on saner reflection realise how silly it is to carry on this false propaganda."

"They know that all their manoeuvres and machinations are to force the Muslim provinces into an interim or permanent all-India union by hook or by crook and what is more, they look to the British bayonets to perform the task for them and, hence, they resort to alternating and varying methods, flattering and hurling abuses cringing and giving threats to the British Government."

"We are determined not to submit to any scheme of an all-Indian union, interim or

otherwise, and we will resist any attempt to impose such a union upon us.

"Their nefarious game to characterise this resistance on our part as exercise of veto by me is, on the face of it, absurd and those who talk like this know that it so.

"To say that our attitude is to obstruct the achievement of freedom for Hindus and Muslims is utterly false, for we want both Hindu and Muslim India to be free, but one cannot agree to any arrangements which means freedom for Hindus and the establishment of Hindu Raj and slavery for the Muslims. The transfer of Muslim India from British raj to Hindu raj is the real issue."

"Mr. Jinnah recalled the recent statement of Sir Stafford Cripps on July 17, in which Sir Stafford had said: 'It is far better to expedite means of arriving at a permanent settlement in which the question of Pakistan must form a major issue. It would not be right to allow any minority, however large and important, to hold up the attainment of self-government in India any more than it would be right to force the Muslim majority provinces into a new constitutional arrangement to which they took fundamental objection.'

"What the Congress wants," Mr. Jinnah continued, "is to force the Muslim majority provinces into an all-India union, to which we not only take fundamental objection, but we shall resist it with all our might if it is imposed upon us.

"I hope that the saner elements of the Hindus will at least realise that it is futile to look up to the British Government to throw Muslim India at the mercy of the Hindu raj or to force a constitution of the Hindu conception upon Muslim India and then maintain it with British bayonets.

"Therefore, the just and the only solution of India's constitutional problem lies in the establishment of Pakistan and Hindustan as we have been urging and explaining to peoples both in India and abroad.

"It is, therefore, the Congress that is obstructing the freedom of all the peoples of India and is really responsible for the deadlock, for it wants all or nothing, which is a dream that will never materialise."

"Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru," he said, "has been summoning the so-called Muslim leaders. According to reports, he is conferring with them. You must not, therefore, think that the congress is not going to give you the greatest possible havoc.

"You have again seen Mr. Gandhi's constructive programme. He uses a word the meaning of which is quite different. You must remember that the Congress has got not only lakhs of rupees, but the figures can be calculated in crores.

"When Mr. Gandhi means constructive programme, it really means a destructive programme for Muslims. They will do their best to disrupt the Muslims, to divide, corrupt, mislead and misguide and bamboozle them. They will resort to every means and device possible.

"But I think, unless my judgment of Muslims is wrong and I have known sufficiently intimately for the last nearly seven years, that all these efforts of the Congress and our enemies are foredoomed to failure.

"I wish that the large amount of money which is at their disposal can be utilised for a better purpose than causing disruption among the Muslims. But I am doubtful whether the leopard can change its spots.

## BRITISH PRESS COMMENT

**M**OST papers agree in placing the chief responsibility on Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League for the breakdown, but on all sides the view is expressed that this setback will not affect British determination to secure a satisfactory settlement.

The Times: "There will be a natural disposition to place the blame for the failure on Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League. The path of wisdom is rather to understand the grounds of their attitude, which derives from longstanding uneasiness for the fate of the Muslim.



community under any system of government by an arithmetical majority such as seems at present to be postulated by the Congress for the democratic India of the future.

"No useful purpose would be served by denying the reality of these fears. It is, in any event, clear that until it is possible to allay the apprehensions of that influential body of Muslim opinion for which the League even by the admission of its opponents, must be deemed to stand, there will be no prospect of accommodation between the Congress and the League. The task will not be easy. But it is the indispensable foundation for the future progress of India.

"The statesmanship now required of the Congress Party by the course of events should not be beyond the range of the leaders, who have gone so far to make the conference a success. They have agreed to co-operate in a reformed government on the terms suggested including full participation in the war effort in the same cordial spirit in which it was put forward, frankly recognising it as a new deal requiring a wholly fresh attitude on their own part.

"They would be more than human if they did not resent what must appear to them as a rejection of their proffered co-operation at the mere dictate of the League. They will be tempted to ask why the Viceroy, with nominees of all the parties save the Muslim League at his disposal, did not proceed to construct his new Government from material so representative.

"The conclusive answer to this question is that an imposed settlement of such a kind would violate the assurances accepted by the conference as the basis of its terms of reference. It would not have assembled unless its members had known that its purpose was to assist India to arrive at an agreement rather than to pay the way for another act of state on the part of Britain. To override the apprehensions of the League with the support of the Congress and of the minorities would have been both morally indefensible and politically inexpedient.

"India now ranks among the most important bases of the war against Japan and the preservation of her tranquility is a major interest of the Allied belligerents, as well as of the British. The administration of the country must be carried on. Far reaching schemes of social and economic progress must be inaugurated and the foundations of its future

international position must be securely laid. Not one of these essentials could be achieved by a government so constituted as to convince one of the major communities that the apprehensions of its largest and most representative political organisation had been overruled by the British at the behest of the others.

"While the breakdown of the Simla conference has shown that the main obstacle to progress in India is the Muslim apprehension of a majority rule and that this can be allayed not by any assurances from this country, but only by a supreme effort on the part of the Congress leaders it remains true to say that Britain can still make a contribution to this essential task.

"By focussing attention upon the real principles at issue between the Congress and the League, and by persisting in the endeavour to bring their leaders together round the same table for economic and social as well as for political objectives, representatives of Britain may do much. Lord Wavell is not readier to admit final defeat in the task of political reconstruction than on a field of battle, and he may be trusted to examine every expedient which offers a hope of progress.

"Careful reflection will be required before the next step can be taken. The effects of such experiments at the Simla conference upon the operation of the ordinary machinery of the Indian Government are profound, and in wartime not lightly to be incurred. But opinion in Britain and in India is united in demanding a solution of the political deadlock by one means or another; and looks to the Viceroy to try again when he thinks that the time is ripe.

"Meanwhile, the Cripps Offer stands in its entirety. The determination of the British people to assist the Indian people to complete self-government remains unchanged by this latest of a long series of setbacks."

**The Daily Telegraph:** "As on previous occasions the cause of the deadlock has been the ancient hostility between the Muslim and the Hindu. Though the Viceroy laboured tirelessly to produce a more accommodating spirit, Mr. Jinnah would not agree even to submit a list of names unless the exclusive right of the Muslim League to speak for the Muslims was accepted in advance. With the progress of Allied operations in the Far East, it should be possible before very long to hold elections in India. Whatever their results may be, as long as there exists among Indian leaders the same spirit of narrow sectarianism



which frustrated Lord Wavell's attempt at settlement, so long will the realisation of Dominion Status in India be held up."

**The News Chronicle**: "The responsibility or the failure of Simla was not Lord Wavell's. It was Mr. Jinnah's and Mr. Jinnah's alone. The Muslim League is not more completely representative of Muslim India than the Congress is completely representative of Hindu India. It is more than probable that if Mr. Jinnah had been concerned only with the technical issue the conference would not have broken down. The real issue at stake was the whole future of Pakistan."

Recalling the growth of the Pakistan idea, the paper writes on the Muslim League's advocacy of it: "It is strong—and a chimera. As a strict geographical or economic entity, Muslim India has no existence, Muslim and Hindu Indias are mixed together and any attempt at artificial separation would create endless hardships and difficulties."

**The Daily Mail**: "Mr. Gandhi wrecked the Cripps proposals and Simla was Mr. Jinnah's turn. As the leader of the Muslim League, he duly wrecked the Wavell proposals. Once again the terrible jealousies and

mistrust which divide the Indian political parties have ruined a promising scheme. The world has witnessed a deplorable exhibition of political irresponsibility.

"Further attempts will be made to secure an agreement, for the British are indefatigable when it comes to securing their own abdication from power in India. But we are still entrusted with the destinies of a vast mass of Indians, so magnificently represented by their fighting armies. That is a responsibility we can never lay down until we are assured that they will receive fair dealing and good government from their own people."

**The Daily Sketch**: "On the contrary, the immediate cause of the failure of the negotiations seemingly ought to be laid at the door of Mr. Jinnah."

**The Daily Herald** wrote: "That the immediate cause of the breakdown was only a symptom of a deeper division over the Muslim League claim for partition and the Congress objective of a single, indivisible India."

"The tragic fact was that it seemed beyond ingenuity at the moment to devise a method of persuading the two great factions to co-operate in self-government."

## WAVELL TRIES AGAIN

"HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT ARE DETERMINED TO DO THEIR UTMOST TO PROMOTE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH LEADERS OF INDIAN OPINION, THE EARLY REALIZATION OF FULL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN INDIA," DECLARED LORD WAVELL, VICEROY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL, IN A BROADCAST FROM NEW DELHI ON WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 19 HE ADDED:

"It is now for Indians to show that they have the wisdom, faith and courage to determine in what way they can reconcile their differences, and how their country can be governed by Indians for Indians."

**E**XPRESSING the hope that Ministerial responsibility would be accepted by political leaders in all provinces after the coming general election, Lord Wavell said that, immediately after the elections, he would undertake discussions with representatives of the provincial legislatures to ascertain whether the proposals contained in the Cripps Plan were acceptable, or whether some alternative or modified scheme was practicable.

It was also the intention of HMG to convene a constitution-making body as soon as possible, and discussions would also be held with representatives of Indian States to ascertain in what way they could best take part in the constitution-making body.

Immediately after the provincial election results were published, the Viceroy would take steps to establish an Executive Council which would enjoy the support of the main Indian parties.

NEW DELHI, September 19,—An official spokesman replying to Press correspondents' questions tonight indicated that although the Viceroy's announcement did not in terms say so, it could be taken that the preamble to the Cripps offer held good now.

The following is the text of the Viceroy's broadcast on September 19.

66 **A**FTER my recent discussions with HMG in London, they authorized me to make the following announcement :

"As stated in the gracious Speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament, HMG are determined to do their utmost to promote, in conjunction with leaders of Indian opinion, the early realization of full self-government in India. During my visit to London they have discussed with me the steps to be taken.

"An announcement has already been made that elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures, so long postponed owing to the war are to be held during the coming cold weather. Thereafter HMG earnestly hope that Ministerial responsibility will be accepted by political leaders in all provinces.

"It is the intention of HMG to convene, as soon as possible, a constitution-making body and, as a preliminary step, they have authorized me to undertake, immediately after the elections, discussions with representatives of the legislative assemblies in the provinces, to ascertain whether the proposals contained in the 1942 Declaration are acceptable, or whether some alternative or modified scheme is preferable. Discussion will also be undertaken with representatives of Indian States with a view to ascertaining in what way they can best take their part in the constitution-making body.

"HMG are proceeding to the consideration of the content of the treaty which will require to be concluded between Great Britain and India.

"During these preparatory stages, the government of India must be carried on, and urgent economic and social problems must be dealt with. Furthermore, India has to play her full part in working out the new world order. HMG have, therefore, further authorized me, as soon as the results of the provincial elections are published, to take steps to bring into being an Executive Council which will have the support of the main Indian parties."

"That is the end of the announcement which HMG have authorized me to make. It means a great deal. It means that HMG are determined to go ahead with the task of bringing India to self-government at the earliest possible date. They have, as you can well imagine, a great number of most important and urgent

problems on their hands ; but, despite all their preoccupations they have taken time, almost in their first days of office, to give attention to the Indian problem as one of the first and most important. That fact is a measure of the earnest resolve of HMG to help India to achieve early self-government.

"The task of making and implementing a new Constitution for India is a complex and difficult one, which will require good will, co-operation and patience on the part of all concerned. We must first hold elections so that the will of the Indian electorate may be known.

"It is not possible to undertake any major alteration of the franchise system. This would delay matters for at least two years. But we are doing our best to revise the existing electoral rolls efficiently.

### Procedure Explained

"After the elections, I propose to hold discussions with representatives of those elected and of the Indian States to determine the form which the constitution-making body should take, its powers and procedure. The Draft Declaration of 1942 proposed a method of setting up a constitution-making body, but HMG recognize that in view of the great issues involved and the delicacy of the minority problems, consultation with the people's representatives is necessary before the form of the constitution-making body is finally determined.

The above procedure seems to HMG and me the best way open to us to give India the opportunity of deciding her destiny. We are well aware of the difficulties to be overcome, but are determined to overcome them. I can certainly assure you that the Government and all sections of the British people are anxious to help India, which has given us so much help in winning this war. I, for my part, will do my best, in the service of the people of India, to help them to arrive at their goal, and I firmly believe that it can be done.

"It is now for Indians to show that they have the wisdom, faith and courage to determine in what way they can best reconcile their differences and how their country can be governed by Indians for Indians."

\* \* \*

An official spokesman in a Press Conference indicated that although the Viceroy's pronouncement did not say so, it could be taken that the preamble to the Cripps offer held good now.

This preamble, it is recalled, defined the object as the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the U.K. and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect and in no way subordinate in any respect of its domestic or external affairs.

The spokesman explained that the constitution-making body as proposed in the Cripps offer would consist of 159 members representing the provincial assemblies plus 50 other members representing Indian States on the population basis. The Cripps proposals, however, held out that if before the end of hostilities representative Indian political leaders could think of a better way or an alternative way, they were welcome to put it forward and HMG would accept it.

A correspondent asked, supposing any party in the country, such as the Muslim League, did not like to enter into the treaty mentioned in the announcement or come into the constitution-making body, did HMG contemplate

any steps to overcome that stumbling block or find other means to implement their scheme?

The spokesman pointed out that as explained in the announcement, the Viceroy after the elections would hold discussions with representatives of the legislative assemblies on the long-term plan, and would also take steps to give effect to the short-term plan of establishing an Executive Council having the support of the main Indian parties. If any stumbling block such as was mentioned in the question arose, the Viceroy would no doubt consider the position at that time.

He emphasized that the offer made in the announcement was a genuine one. Parliamentary government and democracy as they were understood in the USA and Britain, he said depended on tolerance and compromise. What had stood in the way of all the efforts so far made had been the inability of Indians themselves to arrive at any satisfactory compromise. That really was the issue. There was no other way in which democracy of that type could work.

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## DESAI-LIAQUAT FORMULA

### LIAQUAT'S VERSION

**N**AWABZADA Liaquat Ali Khan, General Secretary of the All-India Muslim League, in a statement explains the genesis of the so-called Desai-Liaquat pact and publishes the text of the proposals, which he says, Mr. Desai gave to him in confidence in the course of his talks last year.

"I am informed," he says, that Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, Leader of the Congress Party in Central Assembly, has told the local Press of Bombay that the so-called Desai-Liaquat pact cannot be published as, I desired that it should remain confidential.

"As such a statement by Mr. Desai is bound to create misunderstanding I must place all the facts before the public.

"In this connection, Mr. Desai met me after the last autumn session of the Central Assembly and we informally discussed the prevailing distressing conditions in the country, economic and otherwise and the terrible hardships and plight of the people due to the situation that was created on account of the war.

"The war in Europe was raging in its full fury and there was no indication as to when it would end, and it was the opinion of everyone that it will take at least two years after the termination of hostilities in Europe to bring the war to a successful conclusion against Japan.

#### Main Base.

"India was to be the main base of the Allies for military operations in the East against Japan, which meant, greater sacrifices by the people of India and much greater hardships and privations than what they had been facing in the past. It was recognised that the Government of India with its present composition, were incapable of dealing effectively with the various problems which had arisen and were bound to arise in the future on account of the prolongation of the war.

"I explained to him the position in the light of the resolutions that were passed from time to time by the Muslim League in this connection and told him that my personal view was that if any proposals were made to ease the

situation the Muslim League was bound to give its very careful, consideration to them, as it had always done in the past, because the Muslim League had always been anxious to come to the rescue of the people and assist them in their sad plight and help the country in tiding over the difficult period ahead.

"Mr. Desai saw me again in Delhi in the beginning of January this year just as I was leaving on a tour of the Madras Presidency and showed me some proposals, which he had drafted for the formation of an interim Government at the Centre, a copy of which he was good enough to give me and which was to be treated as strictly private and confidential and on the basis of which he told me that he was going to make an effort to bring about a change in the composition of the Government of India.

"He told me that his plan was to meet the Viceroy and Mr. Jinnah in this connection. I told him that in my personal opinion the proposals were such that they could be made a for discussion, but I did not see any prospect of his making any headway unless he could either get Mr. Gandhi to move in the matter personally or get his definite approval and open support for the move that he was making, as Mr. Gandhi was the only person who could deliver the goods on behalf of the Congress in the absence of the Working Committee.

**Personal Nature of Talks.**

"During my talks with Mr. Desai, which were purely of a personal nature. I made it absolutely clear to him that whatever I had said was my individual view and, I was not speaking either on behalf of the Muslim League, or anyone else.

"If and when Mr. Desai felt that he could speak with authority on behalf of the Congress, he should approach the President of the All-India Muslim League, who was the proper authority to entertain any proposals on behalf of the Muslim League.

"This is the history of these proposals which have been described in the Press by various names, such as Desai-Liaquat formula, Desai-Liaquat pact and so on.

"I have scrupulously respected the wishes of Mr. Desai and have treated the draft proposals as strictly private and confidential and have

not shown them to anyone, but, in view of the statement by Mr. Desai and the confusion that is being created, I feel that these proposals should be published. I am releasing them to the Press."

### **The Pact.**

The following is the Desai-Liaquat pact :

The Congress and the League agree that they will join in forming an interim Government at the Centre. The composition of such a Government will be on the following lines :

(a) Equal number of persons nominated by the Congress and the League in the Central Legislature. Persons nominated need not be members of the Central Legislature.

(b) Representatives of minorities, in particular the Scheduled Castes and the Sikhs.

(c) The Commander-in-Chief.

The Government will be formed and function within the framework of the existing Government of India Act. It is, however, understood that if the Cabinet cannot get a particular measure passed by the Legislative Assembly, it will not enforce the same by resort to any of the reserve powers of the Governor-General of the Viceroy. This will make it sufficiently independent of the Governor-General.

It is agreed between the Congress and the League that if such an interim Government is formed, their first step would be to release the Working Committee members of the Congress.

The steps by which efforts will be made to achieve this end are at present indicated to take the following course :

On the basis of the above understanding some way should be found to get the Governor-General to make a proposal or a suggestion that he desires an interim Government to be formed at the Centre on the agreement between the Congress and the League and when the Governor-General invites Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Desai either jointly or separately the above proposals will be made.

The next step will be to get the withdrawal of Section 93 in the provinces and to form, as soon as possible, provincial Governments on the lines of a coalition.

## DESAI'S VERSION

Interviewed on Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan's statement about the Desai-Liaquat pact, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai said in Poona on September 16.

"On my return to Bombay, my attention was drawn to the statement made by Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan regarding the pact, the text of which has been released to the Press. I must say that its publication surprised me. When I saw a Press statement made by Mr. Gandhi on July 28, in which he had suggested that the pact should be made public, I immediately got in touch with the Nawabzada and suggested that the text be issued to the Press because the document speaks for itself and reveals all the material facts about which, I fear the Nawabzada's statement contains inaccurate statements.

"Unfortunately the Nawabzada had then not found it possible to approve of the publication of the pact. I note now that he has thought fit to publish it himself, without any further reference to me. The better course, would have been for it to have been jointly issued by us, with an agreed statement. The statement he has issued along with the text of the pact has given the public a misleading picture. The statement fails to explain why, in spite of the existence of the pact, now specifically admitted, the Nawabzada found it necessary to repeatedly deny, in public, the existence of any sort of understanding between us.

"The Nawabzada and I had several conversations in connexion with the matter and when I went to Delhi, I had further conversations with the Nawabzada, told him that I had Mr. Gandhi's support in these proposals and that I would reduce them to writing.

"I prepared two copies of the document and met the Nawabzada on January 11 and both the documents were initialled by us. He kept one of them and I have the other.

"The last but one paragraph runs as follows 'On the basis of the above understanding, some way should be found to get the Governor-General to make a proposal or a suggestion that he desires an interim Government to be formed in the Centre on the agreement between the Congress and the League and when the Governor-General invites Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Desai, either jointly or separately, the above proposals would be made, desiring

that they are prepared to join in forming the Government.

"This quotation from the pact clearly bears out that the Nawabzada must have had conversations with Mr. Jinnah, otherwise the assurance contained therein could not have found a place in the document initialled by him."

## III

### LIAQUAT'S REBUTTAL

"It has taken Mr. Bhulabhai Desai 15 days for his attention to be drawn to my Press statement which was published on September 1, regarding the proposals for the formation of an interim Government at the Centre, and that also after his attendance at the meetings of the Congress Working Committee at Poona, where he was specially summoned," says Nawabzada Liaquat Ali. He adds :

"Mr. Desai always had the liberty to publish the proposals if he so wished, but he could not expect me to agree to their being published as a pact between him and myself.

"In his anxiety to show that these proposals were in fact a pact, he states that he had prepared two copies of the document and both the documents were initialled by both of us. This is not so.

"Mr. Desai initialled one copy and handed it to me and took my initials on the other. The copy that I have with me bears only Mr. Desai's initials and is not initialled by both of us as stated by him.

"Mr. Desai states that in my statement I have not explained why I denied publicly the existence of a pact between him and myself. The explanation is very simple. It was incorrect to say that there was a pact. Mr. Desai knows fully well that there was no pact and that mere proposals, which were only a basis for discussion, were being given the status of a pact for reasons best known to him.

"I am afraid Mr. Desai's memory has not served him well when he says that he gathered from conversations that he had with me that I had consulted Mr. Jinnah about the proposals. I never gave him that impression.

"On the contrary, on every occasion that Mr. Desai had talks with me I made it plain to him that whatever I said was my personal view and that I had no occasion to consult Mr. Jinnah about the matter."

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